This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07602553 9

McKeever

NBO

# MAUDE AND MIRIAM.

# Miss A. B. McKeever's Works.

**Children with the Poets.** 12mo. Cloth . . $1 50

Fine Edition, tinted Paper, Cloth, Bevelled Boards, gilt top . . . . . 2 00

Fine Edition, tinted Paper, Cloth, Bevelled Boards, gilt edges . . . . . 2 25

Fine Edition, tinted Paper, super Turkey antique, Roxburghe . . . . . 4 50

**Silver Threads.** 12mo. Cloth . . . . 1 50

**Westbrook Parsonage.** 12mo. Cloth . . 1 50

**Jack and Florie; or, The Pigeons' Wedding.** With eight handsome Illustrations. Quarto.

Fancy paper cover. Plain plates, . . . . 25 cts.

Do. do. Colored Plates, . . . 50 cts.

Cloth gilt side, Colored Plates, . . . 75 cts.

Cloth, gilt side and edge. Colored Plates, Bevelled Boards, . . . . . 1 00

**Little Mary and the Fairy.** With eight Handsome Illustrations. Quarto.

Fancy paper cover. Plain plates, . . . . 25 cts.

Do. do. Colored Plates, . . . 50 cts.

Cloth, gilt sides. Colored Plates, . . . . 75 cts.

Cloth, bevelled boards, gilt edge. Colored Plates, . 1 00

**Maude and Miriam; or, the Fair Crusader.** 12mo.

Cloth, . . . . . 1 50

*The above are for sale by Booksellers generally; or, will be sent by mail, postage paid, on receipt of price, by*

CLAXTON, REMSEN & HAFFELFINGER,

*PUBLISHERS,*

819 and 821 Market St.,

PHILADELPHIA.

DONATED BY THE
MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK CITY

# MAUDE AND MIRIAM;

OR,

# THE FAIR CRUSADER.

BY

HARRIET B. McKEEVER,

AUTHOR OF "SILVER THREADS," "WESTBROOK PARSONAGE," "CHILDREN WITH THE POETS," ETC. ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:
CLAXTON, REMSEN & HAFFELFINGER,
Nos. 819 & 821 MARKET STREET.
1871.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
287690A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1926 L

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by
CLAXTON, REMSEN & HAFFELFINGER,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

STEREOTYPED BY J. FAGAN & SON, PHILADELPHIA.

# PREFACE.

WE find the great adversary in every age encroaching upon the church of the Redeemer, corrupting, enslaving, flattering, persecuting, until, the darkness creeping on, the church was enveloped for ages in a shroud of superstition and deep corruption. But in every age there were the hidden ones given to the Lord Jesus from eternity. With these premises, we take three standpoints from which to view the history of the Crusaders — political, romantic, Christian.

The political historian sees one set of men distinguished by great and heroic qualities, holding the reins of power, ruling the world, and, deifying these, to man only he gives the glory. The novelist searches for romantic incident and striking characters; and Sir Walter Scott, with his magic pen, paints pictures that fascinate and thrill: but no finger of God is seen among them. We are in the midst of mailed knights and clanging armor, and the shouts of tournaments, of noble ladies and inspiring music, and the fierce conflicts of those feudal days; but the great novelist gives us no key by which to unlock the secret cells where God hath hidden his own people in all ages of the world. It remains,

therefore, for the Christian to take God's own book, and with that to search for his own people.

Surrounded as they were, for many centuries, by the corruptions of the Romish Church, denied the pure Word of God, it was only here and there that the Great Head of the Church placed his seal upon the souls of the faithful.

With these views, doubtless we shall find hidden in secret places his own dear children, and may perhaps find his blessed gospel in the hands of a few anxious to know the truth. Thus moves the panorama of the world's history before us, until, through ages of increasing wickedness, we come to these feudal days, at last ushering in the Crusaders,— days when bands of plunderers roamed through Europe, property held only by the sword; the history of that age a medley of massacre and crime. But the world at length grew tired of barbarity, and a reacting spirit of order was born from this heaving chaos.

It was then that some poor nobles leagued together, with the holy purpose of redressing wrongs and defending the weak. They gave their hands to each other in pledge that they would not turn back from their work, and called upon St. George to bless their cause.

The church sanctified it with a solemn benediction.

And now awoke fully the spirit of chivalry. Let us glance at the bright impersonation, as it stood forth gallantly clad in this period of the world's history.

With an eye fixed upon the Paradise which it imagined; a lip that spoke the words of truth, honor, loyalty, reverence, purity, and benevolence; with an arm grasping the

sword in the defence of innocence and oppression; feet ready to march at all times in the service of the Church; clad in the armor of knighthood, and set apart by religious ceremonies, we behold a soldier of the cross in mediæval days! The people almost adored their heroic defenders; for every moral virtue became a part of knightly honor.

They did their work in revolutionizing the face of society, and passed away.

In the meanwhile, let us, Christians of the nineteenth century, learn a powerful lesson from the deeds of the Crusaders. We see them, in their fanatical zeal, laying aside every weight, with a single aim directed to one great object of recovering the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of infidels; men with the same moral and intellectual nature that we possess.

If, then, the whole of Christendom were stirred up to leave home, and friends, and ease, for that one object; if men and women of all ranks took up the cross for an empty tomb, how much more should the Christians of a more enlightened age imitate their zeal and self-sacrifice by bending every energy to the one glorious object of restoring this revolted world to the dominion of our Lord. Joining no crusade against fellow-Christians, fighting no spirits of the air, but in a solid phalanx, with a crusader's zeal, warring against every real form of opposition to the kingdom of our Lord.

In conclusion, the facts related in this introductory chapter, and elsewhere, are derived largely from Proctor's "History of the Crusades," and James's "History of Chiv-

alry;", but so mingled with the writer's own remarks, that they are not distinguished by quotation-marks, but accredited in this general manner. To Sir Walter Scott we are indebted for extracts from the Wardour manuscripts, in the description of a tournament, in the same manner. The hymns are gathered from Neal's "Mediæval Hymns," and Dr. Schaff's "Christ in Song." Unable to obtain any of the lays of the old troubadours, the author has attempted imitations.

# CONTENTS.


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | THE PRIORY | 13 |
| II. | RAVENSCLIFF | 26 |
| III. | GAY BESIEGERS | 41 |
| IV. | BEDE'S GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN | 49 |
| V. | THE YULE LOG | 59 |
| VI. | THE BRAVE DAYS OF OLD | 70 |
| VII. | MAUDE IN THE TWILIGHT | 81 |
| VIII. | THE TROUBADOURS | 92 |
| IX. | CRUSADERS AT THE CASTLE | 105 |
| X. | MAUDE IN THE DAY-DAWN | 116 |
| XI. | ROYAL VISITORS | 128 |
| XII. | THE TOURNAMENT | 138 |
| XIII. | THE EVIL EYE AT HAWKSWORTH | 154 |
| XIV. | THE MIDNIGHT MASS | 168 |
| XV. | EVELINE AT COURT | 183 |
| XVI. | WELCOME AT ACRE | 197 |
| XVII. | THE CAGED LION | 213 |

CHAPTER PAGE

XVIII.—Maude and Miriam . . . . . 226

XIX.—Moonlight among the Wounded . . . 237

XX.—Maude Languishes . . . . . 252

XXI.—Ascalon . . . . . 269

XXII.—The Pilgrimage to Jerusalem . . . 281

XXIII.—The Priory of St. Agnes . . . . . 292

XXIV.—Return of the Crusaders . . . . 301

XXV.—One of a Royal Priesthood . . . . 321

# MAUDE AND MIRIAM.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE PRIORY.

WE are in the feudal days of Old England, often spoken of by ancient poets as "brave and merrie Angoland," when the rude and warlike spirit of the times, notwithstanding the truce of God, rendered it unsafe for females to travel without an escort.

We will apply brave now to the beauty of the country, while yet the grand old forests covered so many broad acres.

It is spring-time; that fresh and vernal season when Nature puts on her lovely robes in that "fair countrie."

Though matrons and young maidens are necessarily secluded, the free and happy birds are filling the air with their melody; for they sang then, as they do now, over the ploughed and blood-stained battle-field as in the green and shady forest. We have just emerged from one of these solitudes, and turn our eyes upon a hill-top where a gay cavalcade is just appearing on the brow, a flood of sunlight illumining the grassy sward.

It is a bright and gallant sight, but by no means unusual.

Mounted upon fine chargers, two young esquires head the procession in the glittering attire of those days; three pages follow, leading each a noble palfrey richly caparisoned, with crimson saddle-cloths heavily embroidered, trimmed with a broad gilt border, and reaching almost to the ground. There are twenty-four men-at-arms in the rear, and as the sun shines upon the glittering armor, we hear the clanging of swords, the cheery voices of the leaders beguiling the way with pleasant, merry converse.

Whither are they bound?

Let us listen awhile to the two gallant young esquires.

"It hath been long season syth we have looked upon Maude," said the young man to the right; "no playful little demoiselle now, forsooth!"

"Yes, Guy, the years atween fourteen and eighteen ripen our Norman maidens," said her brother, Lancelot de Vere. The former speaker, Guy de Mowbray, was the chosen friend of the latter; they had not stepped very far over the twenties in their young lives, both sons of stately barons dwelling in two feudal castles,—near enough, however, to admit of intercourse,—and were now on their way to the Priory of St. Agnes, where, according to the customs of the nobles, Maude and Eveline de Vere and Alice de Mowbray, had been immured four years, receiving their education under the care of a sister of the Baron of Ravenscliff, who was prioress of the convent.

Over hill and dale, and by the border of silver streams,

they pursued their way, meeting only a few peasants, who lived in a state of serfdom on the estates of their feudal masters. But we are in sight of the ancient priory, standing, in its gloomy stateliness, just on the borders of a deep forest. It is a fine old abbey, whose dark-gray towers are covered with ivy, the growth of many passing years; for it is probable that there are mouldering forms beneath its time-worn stones, whose hands may have plucked the oldest of the dark-green wreaths.

A loud ring at the convent-gate, opening upon the court-yard, brought one of the cloistered nuns to answer the summons.

"We would see the holy mother," said the young man, who was the first to speak; "tell her that Lancelot de Vere waiteth her bidding."

The nun silently disappeared, and in a few minutes returned with orders to admit the two leaders, and to direct the pages and men-at-arms to out-buildings used for such in times of danger.

Conducted forward into the parlor of the abbey, they were directed to seats, and the nun again silently disappeared. The door soon opened, and a lady of unusually commanding appearance, clad in the costume of her order, entered.

"Art come for thy sisters, Lancelot?" said the lady; "the maidens have been sore distraught with waiting: I trow if aught else hath filled their foolish heads but thy coming."

"Not more than seemeth at Ravenscliff, holy mother," was the reply; "for all be astir at the old castle, from

Father Ambrose the priest to Cicely the old nurse; but where tarry the young demoiselles? can we see them speedily?"

The prioress rang the bell, and the same nun that admitted them answered the call.

"Bid the Ladies Maude and Eveline de Vere, and the Lady Alice de Mowbray, to the small parlor: visitors await them."

In a minute or two, the three entered.

"A lovely trio!" thought the young esquires, as they greeted the maidens; Guy especially attracted toward the playmate of his childhood. Maude and Eveline were twin sisters, bearing strong resemblance to each other in form, feature, and carriage; but in expression, entirely distinct.

Maude's dark-brown eyes were full of thought and earnest feeling, but Eveline's were dancing with merriment at all times. Maude's beautiful black hair was glossy, wavy, and gathered up into a golden net, as was the fashion of the day for young ladies.

Eveline's had a sunny tint, with the same head-dress, but which could not wholly confine the profusion of small curls that would stray from the confinement.

Maude's mouth was expressive of tenderness, firmness, decision. Eveline's, though cut in the same delicate curves of beauty, quivered in its nest of dimples, stirred by every shade of feeling.

Maude's figure was of the same height as Eveline's, but a common observer would pronounce her much taller, so erect and dignified were all her movements, while Eveline's quick

and graceful motions were the very personification of light-hearted girlhood.

Alice de Mowbray, a girl of nineteen, with dark hair, and eyes resembling her brother Guy, with lineaments strongly marked by their Norman descent, was the third who hastened to meet the visitors in the convent parlor.

"Brother, mine," said Maude, as she clasped Lancelot around the neck; "all yestreen I watched from matin hour to vesper's close, and thou camest not; but how thou hast grown, amaist as tall as our father."

"And thou, Maude," holding her off at arm's length; "soothly, when last I saw thee, thou wert a little demoiselle, and now thou art — shall I whisper in thine ear? — a queen of beauty."

Maude blushed at compliments, even from her brother, as she replied:

"And thou, Lancelot, art no more a page, but a brave esquire, forsooth!"

Lancelot had an arm around each of his lovely sisters, and smiling upon Eveline, he said:

"Thou art very like thy sister, and yet not like; for Maude is a picture of the Madonna, but thou art merry as a mavis; in thy laughing eyes I see it, Eveline."

Guy had waited patiently for the greeting of the brother and sisters.

And now Maude extended her hand.

"Wilt pardon me, Guy? It hath been so long syth I clasped hands with Lancelot, that perchance meseemeth rude, but, certes, I meant it not."

Guy bent with knightly courtesy over the extended hand, feeling the great difference between this lovely woman and the little queen of his boyish sports.

"How fareth Father Ambrose?" inquired Maude.

"Just as jolly an old friar as ever drank a flagon of good ale, Maude," replied her brother. "He will not trouble thee with hard penances, for, beshrew me! an' he hath never on me laid one for my many sins."

"And good old Cicely?" said Eveline.

"A clever old soul she seemeth," replied Lancelot, "counting the days syth Michaelmas, when she wist that her young demoiselles were coming home."

"What sayest thou of our father, Lancelot?"

"Unquiet, Maude; for the Baron of Ravenscliff liketh not a life of ease in a lady's bower. He talketh much and often about the crusades. I should not be astonied an' he were to join the soldiers of the cross ere the rising and setting of many suns."

"The Baron of Ravenscliff is brave as he is good, Lancelot, and it becometh not the children of a true knight to say nay, when the Holy Sepulchre is in the hands of infidels; but the bare thought wringeth the heart."

"Thou wilt have a brother and a father ere long, I trow, among the crusaders; but I must know something of thy doings, Maude, syth thine abode at St. Agnes; what hast thou learned in all these years?"

"I can read Latin, and our own tongue, too, Lancelot?"

"That is a marvel for a young demoiselle. What sayest thou, Eveline?"

The merry-hearted sister blushed.

"I can read my breviary, Lancelot; but I trow that is for me enough of learning."

"Canst write, Maude?"

"It was hardly opposed at first, but our aunt, the lady prioress, said yea, at last."

"Canst write, Eveline?" said her brother, with a mischievous smile.

"Yea, truly, brother mine; I can write Eveline de Vere."

"What is thy farther learning, Maude?"

"I can play on the harp and cithern; and so can Eveline."

"I must hear thee anon, sister mine; but go on, Maude, a baron's daughter must know more than all this."

"I can embroider; and so can Eveline."

"Troublous days in an old castle, an' it be beleaguered, call for sterner work than music and 'broiderie, Maude."

"To look at bleeding limbs, and to dress them, too, we are trained; to compound medicines and to nurse the sick; to make good broth and grewal, and furmety, and such like."

"An' that be so, then wilt thou be high in favor with Father Ambrose, for he liketh these savory dishes."

Turning to his aunt, the lady prioress, he continued:

"I trow that these fair demoiselles be well trained for the daughters of a feudal baron; for troublous days may be upon us ere we are 'ware of it. But come, Maude, let us hear some of thy music."

The young maiden took the cithern — a sweet stringed instrument suitable for an accompaniment to the voice — in her hand, and in a very touching manner sang the old hymn called the *Urbs Beata.*

"Said I not that thou wouldst be our saint, fair sister?" said her brother; "for thou likest the old hymns yet. Now, Eveline, for thine."

Tuning the instrument to a livelier measure, she sang one of the light and airy songs of the troubadours.

"That suiteth this lower world better, meseemeth," said her brother; "the hymns of the old saints for Maude, but the lays of Provence for Eveline."

A night's repose in the quarters appointed prepared the party for an early start.

Their aunt, the lady prioress, was to bear them company; for in those days the sisterhood of the cloister were not immured so entirely as in after centuries, for they were often seen at tournaments, banquets, and other places of worldly enjoyment. The mettlesome young palfreys stood at the gate of the abbey, champing their bits and pawing the earth, impatient to be gone, and yet the young maidens betrayed no fear of the spirited animals; for from early life the children of the nobles were accustomed to equestrian exercises.

Close by the side of Maude's palfrey stood a page of eighteen years, waiting to assist his lady to mount.

"How farest thou, good Wilfred?" said the damsel, extending her hand, and turning her fair young face to the admiring youth.

The page, bowing in deep reverence over the delicate hand, replied in respectful tones:

"Well, my lady, and happy now that thou comest to Ravenscliff, for those have been weary days without the fair Lady Maude."

"Thou art a good boy, Wilfred," replied the lady.

The page raised his eyes to the face of the speaker, evidently not well pleased that the lovely damsel should regard him as a boy.

Placing his hand upon the stirrup, he aided Maude to mount with a light, graceful spring, rewarding him with her own sweet smile. Mounting his own horse, the page took his place at the head of the men-at-arms nearest to the Lady Maude.

It was a brilliant cavalcade. The waving of the gay plumes of the young esquires in the sunlight, the four ladies mounted on their dancing palfreys, whose silver bells upon their bridles kept time to the pacing step of the mettlesome animals, all combined to make the gay cortége a picture not uncommon in those mediæval days, the music of youthful laughter filling the air.

We find Guy de Mowbray by the side of his youthful companion, trotting on at a brisk pace over the green hills and by the border of silver streams, while overhead the bright clouds chased each other through the firmament, on this sunny day in spring, in such fleecy troops as might lead a bright fancy to imagine that perchance their airy grace might veil the joyous spirits of that lovely season.

"Dost remember our old sports, Maude?" said her companion.

"Yes, Guy; but those young days come not again. Dost know aught of my pretty merlin?"

"I saw the bird not long syth. Old Ralph the falconer seemeth to favor thine; methinks that there be naught to hinder us from like sports again. Dost remember our mimic tournaments, Maude, when thou wast the queen of love and beauty, and I the crowned knight of chivalry?"

"Brave and joyous were those early days, Guy. The latter may be acted again, for I look to see thee a brave and gallant knight."

Thus the two beguiled the way in the sweet abandon of youthful confidence, scarcely noticing the castles of the feudal barons, and only occasionally looking back at the party enlivened by Eveline's silvery laugh and merry sallies of wit.

They have just reached the brow of a hill, when suddenly Maude exclaims:

"There standeth proud old Ravenscliff, Guy, strong and grand as ever! for marks of many a siege doth she bear upon her walls. Nothing pleaseth my father better than to gather us all around the huge fire, when the winter winds be howling, and to tell us of the brave deeds of our old ancestors. Even the old stag-hound at his feet used to seem stirred when the baron was in these moods."

"Thou mayst have many such stories, Maude, for here we are at the drawbridge."

A signal from the cavalcade brought an answer from the warder's tower, and in a very short time the portcullis was raised, the drawbridge fell, and the party passed in. The

warder's horn had signalled an arrival to the dwellers in the keep, and the baron and his lady, with Father Ambrose and old Cicely, were in waiting in the banqueting-hall, ready to receive the company. It was one of the bright days at Ravenscliff; for strong ties of love bound the family, all centring their pride in the noble baron, whom they esteemed as great and good as Godfrey du Bouillon.

Tarrying one night at Ravenscliff, the De Mowbrays met the household at breakfast, saddened by the thought of separation.

Soon after the morning meal, we find Guy and Maude treading the dewy path that led to the pleasance, — a favorite walk with the young people of the castle, — the fresh morning air of the early spring-time imparting a rosy tint to the cheek and sparkling brightness to the full, dark eye of the young damsel.

Many a time had they trodden this grassy path together, Guy leading Maude by the hand; but it was no longer a playful child that sported beside him, but a blushing maiden in the sweet flush of young womanhood that, with light and timid footsteps, entered the summer-house at the end of the shaded pathway.

"Dost mind how time passeth, Maude?" said the young man; "full four years syth we sat here together. Thou wert then gay as a singing bird, weaving garlands for the May-pole; but now thine eyes be full of deep thoughts. It seemeth as though thou hast stepped over more than four years syth then."

Maude smiled, as she replied:

"It seemeth so to me, Guy; and no easy task, I trow, would it be to tell thee the visions that haunt me day by day."

"I have counted the years, Maude, then the months, and of late the days, that would bring thee back to Ravenscliff; but, Maude, I much fear that the Baron of Hawksworth permitteth not the return of the pleasant days that we have passed together."

"I pray thee tell me why, Guy; for it would grieve me sore an' that should be so."

"The baron liketh not thy father, Maude. It hath been said that they crossed each other's path in love,—and my father forgiveth not an injury; but it parteth us not; doth it, Maude?"

"I trow that cannot be, Guy, unless thou willest it."

Guy turned his dark eye tenderly upon Maude's face, as he replied, in tones of deep feeling:

"Willest it, Maude? Thinkest thou, sweet one, that it be an easy task to blot out the memory of childish days? And now that I once more see thy fair face, Maude, it be painted here upon my heart, never to be dimmed by passing years. Knowest thou this trinket, Maude?" (drawing from its hiding-place a small bracelet.)

The maiden blushed, as she replied:

"Well do I mind the day when, in the tilt-yard, I gave it to thee, years agone, when thou wast a crowned knight, Guy."

And thus the two beguiled the passing hour in that sweet converse of youthful hearts until the sight of the palfreys,

brought out in front of the castle, signalled the hour of departure near at hand.

Slowly the two trod the grassy path back to the keep, and, after sorrowful farewells, the party took their leave of the castle. Maude looked pensively after the little retinue as it passed out of the inner ballium and disappeared from sight, wondering when she should greet the young faces again. Very thoughtful was the young damsel all the rest of the day; for Guy's visit had disturbed the surface of Maude's pure thoughts; and the sweet murmur of his low-spoken words lingered long around her pillow, after her usual hour of rest, like tender music, lulling her to sleep with unformed, dreamy visions of the border-land of young womanhood — sweet dreams, whose shadows have no name; dreams that visit the young maiden but once.

## CHAPTER II.

### RAVENSCLIFF.

ONE scarcely realizes now what England was in the dark days of the Middle Ages. We travel delighted amid its highly cultivated lands, surrounded on all sides by features of beauty, and may well call the island kingdom a lovely garden, with its magnificent modern castles, its sylvan parks, its picturesque cottages, its hawthorn hedges, its luxuriance of flowers in the early spring, — not a vestige now remaining of the extensive domains once inhabited by the rude barons of feudal times, save a few ancient ruins, with an occasional castle kept in something of its former style, and the grand old monarchs of the forest that have outlived the reigns of many buried kings.

The long-protracted state of savage society had brought in the feudal system, and had built throughout the kingdom the strong fortifications known as the castles of the Norman barons, where, like petty kings, they ruled their vassals.

We will travel around the battlements of one of these old fortresses in the north of England. Built upon a commanding eminence, it might well be called a cliff, and on the borders of a vast forest where ravens built their nests when it was first erected, it was well named Ravenscliff. It was

one of the strongest and grandest of these old castles, with high embankments crowned with battlements, and flanked by circular bastions in the angles formed by the walls. These massy walls were pierced for gates, with drawbridges, and towers on each side, very strong, and further guarded by descending gratings called a portcullis. The walls were surrounded by a moat as a further defence from the attacks of enemies. There was also the barbican, — a raised mound or tower, — the outer walls having terraces toward the castle. The gate-house was flanked with towers and crowned with projections, through which heavy missiles or molten lead were dropped on the heads of the assailants. The outer ballium was a large space containing the lodgings of the soldiers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and other artificers, and also the extensive stables of a feudal baron.

The inner ballium contained the garden where the donjon, or keep, was situated, — the stronghold inhabited by the baron and his retinue, — added to which was the chapel, and under the keep, the dungeon, where prisoners were confined.

In the central part of the keep were the state apartments, situated in the third story, having large windows placed high in the lofty rooms, to secure the occupants against weapons discharged from without.

There were huge ornamented fire-places and pillars in the walls of the state apartments; rude enough, however, at the best.

The two lower stories had no windows, but were merely lighted from loop-holes. Nothing could be more uncomfortable than the sleeping-rooms, which were only little

dark recesses on the winding stairs leading to the battlements.

We will drop a few words now about the lord of this feudal castle.

Reginald de Vere, Baron of Ravenscliff, was a knight of rare qualities of heart and mind, with a noble form and face, and, according to the code of chivalry, of the highest order among the Norman knighthood. From earliest youth he had studied the character of that prince among knights, Godfrey du Bouillon. Brave in the battle-field, generous to his enemies, the soul of honor and truth, gentle, tender, and courteous to the fair sex, devoted to the Holy Church, in whose service he was ready to yield his life, he had gathered around him the very flower of chivalry, who almost worshipped the Baron of Ravenscliff. His vassals outside respected their feudal master, who, though they retained the old Saxon animosity to their conquerors, still were obliged to do justice to the man who in times of peace was the friend and benefactor of all his people.

So we find him in days of trouble and distress ministering to their necessities, often sending the Lady Jaqueline on errands of mercy to the huts of the peasantry. It is true that he was a petty king among them; but he did not abuse his power; for we do not find the mothers of the young Saxons, like those of Palestine, terrifying them with the cry that "Richard was in the bush;" but rather it was no uncommon thing, when the baron passed by with his men-at-arms, to hear them say, "Come out, lads, the good baron passeth by." Encouraged by his kindly smile, the urchins

were not afraid to clasp the foot within the stirrup, whenever he stopped at the doors of the peasants. But, like other good men, the baron had his enemies; none more implacable than the Baron of Hawksworth,—a dark, revengeful man, who dwelt in his castle in sullen grandeur. In early days the Lord of Ravenscliff had crossed his path in love; for the Lady Jaqueline had refused the hand of Richard de Mowbray, and accepted Reginald de Vere. From that day the former had been his deadly foe; but, having married cousins, the two families had maintained some kind of intercourse, kept up chiefly by the young people.

The wealth and popularity of the Lord of Ravenscliff had but increased the animosity, which showed itself in coldness and alienation; sometimes, in a freak of sullenness, forbidding all intercourse between the two families. But, strange to say, Eveline de Vere had always maintained her influence over the rude Lord of Hawksworth,—no one knew wherefore, unless it were the strong likeness between herself and the Lady Jaqueline,—therefore she counted upon her power to bring her cousins speedily to Ravenscliff.

Maude took but little interest in the merriment around, being more occupied with the services at the chapel, and the feminine occupations of the day. She excelled upon the harp, and devoted much time to improvement upon the instrument; for it was her father's favorite; and we find her one day entertaining him with her music, choosing that which pleased him best.

Our Lady calls. To arms! to arms!
For Moslems hold the land

Where lies the body of our Lord,
And we like cravens stand.
To arms! to arms! our Lady calls.

Our Lady calls. Arise! arise!
Gird on thine armor bright:
She needs the sword and battle-axe
Of every valiant knight.
Our Lady calls. Arise! arise!

Our Lady calls. Her battle-cry
Is ringing through the world.
Let every banner in the land
Be speedily unfurled.
Our Lady calls. To arms! to arms!

Our Mother calls. Heed not the tears
Shed in a lady's bower;
Let the shrill trumpet sound the blast
From every castle tower.
Our Lady calls. To arms! to arms!

Our Lady calls. The loyal heart,
Beneath a maiden's breast,
Bids father, brother, lover go
To do our Lord's behest.
Our Lady calls. To arms! to arms!

Our Lady calls. You give your life;
And we for holy cross
Give all we love in this dark world,
Nor count its treasure loss.
Our Lady calls. We go! we go!

"Where didst learn that song, Maude?" inquired the baron.

Maude blushed, as she replied:

"It is mine own, father."

"Sayest thou so, Maude? Thine own! music and words, too?"

"Both, father, by my troth."

"Thou seemest almost inspired, Maude. Methinketh that the troubles in the Holy Land inspire the dullest."

The return of the young maidens to their home was quite a stirring event at the castle, and the Lady Jaqueline had been for some time preparing for their coming.

Father Ambrose, too, partook of the general joy; for he remembered Maude as a devout, intelligent child for those dark days, and much attached to the old friar.

Accordingly, we find him joining the young maiden after early matins.

"Where loitereth thy sister, Maude?" said the old priest.

"Eveline complaineth of weariness, father. Methinketh that she careth more for sleep than for the rites of Holy Church."

"The blessing of the Holy Virgin be with thee, Maude; for a faithful daughter thou seemest."

"Dost see my breviary, father? It hath been blessed by our Holy Father the Pope himsel'."

The friar crossed himself as he touched the book.

"A holy gift, Maude! Mayst thou use it well!"

"I wish that I might read the holy Gospel, father; what hindereth? I can read the English tongue."

"There be quite enow for women in the breviary, Maude; why troublest thou thysel' about hard things? Go to thy 'broiderie and thy harp, child."

"Meliketh both, holy father; but there seem higher things for God's children; for thou sayest that holy baptism maketh us all his children."

The priest turned his eyes inquiringly upon Maude's earnest face, wondering what strange thoughts were stirring the depths of the young spirit. Maude wondered too; for she knew not yet the name of the invisible teacher that Jesus left to his ransomed Church. She knew not yet that God, in all ages of the world, had his hidden ones. Would that she could have read the blessed words:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

The priest continued:

"Trouble not thysel', Maude, about things too hard for thee. Be content with teachings of Holy Church. Now hie thee to thy bower-woman, and adorn thysel' as becometh a maiden of high degree; but forget not my dish of furmety."

"Meliketh to do thy bidding, father; but an' the Gospel be God's word, it seemeth to me plain enow that it cometh for all his children, just like unto the sun and rain, father, which shineth and falleth on all alike; and the Gospel seemeth a higher gift."

"Thou talkest about things too hard for thee, Maude.

Go, sely* wench, to thy woman's work and thy girlish sports. It becometh thee to look after thy merlin and thy gauds, Maude. Thy mother, the Lady Jaqueline, hath a goodly store of women's gear, just from London; an' thy bright eyes look once on the fair tunics and kirtles, thou forgettest the old Gospel."

Maude walked away with a solemn step, wondering if the Gospel, sent down from heaven, could be placed by the side of the glittering gauds of girlish vanity.

"Nay, nay, Father Ambrose," thought Maude, "an' it cometh from heaven, it hath more value than diamonds or precious stones."

After a substantial Norman breakfast, where there were wine and ale and meats in abundance, we meet the Lady Jaqueline in her own private bower, surrounded by her damsels, of whom there were a goodly number.

There was no little excitement among the young maidens when the Lady Jaqueline brought out the numerous purchases for the sisters. Holding a white silk kirtle in her hand, she said:

"Dost like this pretty kirtle, Maude? Soothly it becometh thee well, with its silver trimming, and this tunic of pale blue silk. The queen hersel' weareth no finer, I trow."

"It seemeth just what suiteth royal maidens; but, mother mine, damsels in this old castle, so far from courts, need not such brave attire."

"How sayest thou, Maude? Thou mayest visit the court

* Foolish.

of England, Maude; for King Richard knoweth thy father as a true and loyal baron."

Eveline was in raptures over a suit of pink and green, trimmed in like manner.

Then was displayed another of rich velvet, trimmed with miniver; then came elegant head-dresses of costly material, followed by magnificent jewels, and all the superb array common among the nobles.

Quickly attired in the pink and green, Eveline dropped a curtsey before her mother, saying:

"What thinkest thou, mother mine? We must needs display this brave attire. Our birthday draweth nigh; we must spread a banquet for the day. Guy and Alice sit at that table, I ween. Beshrew me! an' they come not to the banquet; an' it pleaseth thee, Lancelot and Maude joineth the retinue to Hawksworth, and Wilfred d'Arcy carrieth the invitation on the dagger's point. Eveline returneth not without consent from the grim baron."

"Thy fancy pleaseth me well, Eveline. What sayeth Maude?"

"What pleaseth my good mother, pleaseth me; but more quiet sports than banquetings suit me better."

The morning was spent in examining particularly the elegant wardrobe; Eveline and the other young damsels in raptures over the luxurious display.

"Dost know, Lady Eveline, that there hath been much talk of a tournament?" said Gertrude Ellerton; "the young knights already repair their armor, and practise daily in the tilt-yard."

"A tournament!" exclaimed Eveline. "The very tidings that most please me! Seemeth it lonely in this great castle, Gertrude?"

"I trow not," was the reply; "for with the damsels waiting upon the Lady Jaqueline, the pages, esquires, and knights, there lacketh not good company even in this great fortress. Then there come the hawking and hunting, our Christmas sports, and the visits of the troubadours from France. Who talketh of loneliness at Ravenscliff?" said the young lady, looking around upon her companions.

A smile passed over the young faces as the voices echoed:

"Not I! not I! nor I! Lonely, indeed! with all these brave pages and esquires."

In a few days, Lancelot came with the intelligence that a party was proposed to go on a hawking expedition; and a goodly company of young ladies and esquires appeared in the inner ballium, equipped for the sport.

It was one of the brightest of May mornings, — a time when the delightful brilliancy of the day, the temperature of the air, and the joyous work of tillage seen in every direction, made the temptation to out-door sports irresistible.

It was a gallant sight, — the grooms and equerries, the young esquires in their bright attire, and the ladies with their plumes waving in the brisk wind, and a hooded hawk perched upon each delicate wrist. Ralph the falconer remembered that it had been some time since the young damsels had engaged in this sport, and therefore took some pains to instruct them as to the mode of holding the hawk, and throwing her off the wrist.

In merry chat the party wound their way out of the castle gate, over the drawbridge, cantering on at a brisk rate down by the banks of the river, carefully looking on every side for the game; but no heron was visible, although there was a heronry not far off. For some time it seemed as though the party were doomed to disappointment, but not fancying the ridicule of the pages left behind, they were for perseverance. Ralph understood the dilemma, and spoke:

"An' the ladies like a ride of three miles farther, methinketh that the long-shanked birds meet us there in numbers that stir up the hawks to cancelier till their brains reel."

"Onward, my merry knights!" said Eveline de Vere. "It hath been a long season syth such a hawking party starteth from Ravenscliff."

"Onward! onward!" echoed other young voices, bent upon success.

Maude rode forward on her lively jennet as light as a lark, the plumes in her riding-bonnet dancing in the wind; the attendants near, with dogs, pouches, lines, and all other appurtenances of the royal sport.

"Thy merlin seemeth a splendid bird, Maude," said her brother.

"She looketh gay and fierce as ever," was the answer. "See what broad shoulders, and how vigorously she rouseth hersel'; an' I dare remove her hood, I could show thee eyes full, fierce, and dark as the boldest."

Advancing still further up the stream, it suddenly turned on one side, forming a mountain lake, or tarn.

On the side next to the falconers arose a ridge of gray rock; on the opposite, a heathy hill, whose fresh spring carpet looked soft as green velvet, crowned with bushes of the same bright color.

A broad beach of sand extended around the lake, forming a fine opportunity to the rider to exercise and breathe his horse. And here the party rested, looking anxiously around for the heron, but as yet none were in sight; but out in the stream lay immersed some rocky masses forming small islets, and, standing on one, Ralph perceived the heron that they had sought so long. Eager expectation was now at its greatest height, and several impulsive spirits were in haste to make a movement.

"Now silence!" said the falconer, "until the proper time for starting the bird."

Sad and solitary the heron stood on a stone, watching for such small fish as might pass along, quite unconscious of the ambuscade plotting his destruction.

A few low brief words as to the best mode of starting the quarry were anxiously discussed, as if some great enterprise hung upon the issue.

At a signal from the falconer, the party began to advance upon the heron, who, now for the first time aware of their presence, drew himself up to his full height, erected his long, thin neck, spread out his broad wings, uttered his harsh, clanging cry, and projecting his length of thin legs behind him, rose upon the breeze.

Ralph was near Maude, whose hawk was unhooded that she might see the quarry.

"Now is the time," said the falconer, as Maude threw off the bird, encouraged by one loud whoop from the falconers. Eager as a war-horse rushes to the battle, so darted the fierce falcon toward her enemy, while the heron exerted all his powers to escape from his formidable foe.

Plying all his strength, he ascended higher and higher in the air by short gyrations, that the falcon might not pounce upon him; while his spiked beak, at the extremity of his long neck, enabled him to strike at a yard's distance.

Then Eveline threw off her hawk, encouraged by the halloos of the falconers, to join her companion. Both were bent upon mounting by small circles, endeavoring to gain that superior height which the heron, too, was bent upon preserving. To the delight of the spectators, the fight was continued until all three were nearly mingled with the fleecy clouds, from which was heard the harsh, plaintive cry of the quarry, appealing, as it were, to the heaven which he was approaching, against the cruelty of those by whom he was persecuted.

At length one of the hawks had reached a height from which she attempted her attack upon the heron, who so cunningly defended himself, that he received the blow of the hawk on his beak, thus spiking the body of one of his fierce enemies, who fell fluttering into the lake, and perished there.

But the remaining bird, avenging the fate of her sister, assailed him on the other wing. The falcon thus succeeding in binding his prey, both came tumbling down together from a great height in the air.

The next great object was for the falconers to come in to the rescue in time to prevent the heron from wounding the bird, either by his sharp beak or talons; and the whole party — the men setting their spurs, and the ladies switching their palfreys — flew like the wind to the scene of conflict. There lay the heron and falcon in the mortal struggle upon the green moss, the wing of the heron having been broken by the stoop of the former. The falconers were just in time to save the hawk, by thrusting the heron's beak into the earth, and breaking his legs, thus permitting the falcon to dispatch him on easy terms. Neither sex nor station allowed of interference here, although Maude's tender, womanly instincts felt the cruelty of such barbarous sport; but the savage spirit of those early times still lingered in their sports as well as in the battle-field. It is for a higher development of true Christianity, by which all the wrongs of God's creation are to be righted.

We Christians of the nineteenth century need not lift our hands in holy horror at such sports; for have we no human falcons in Christian countries allowed to engage in strife more revolting, where even human blood is shed? Have we no literature, no dramas, which encourage such brutal sports? But so much has education to do with our moral sense, that Maude, gentle as she was, applauded the brave falcon when she took her once more upon her wrist.

"Thou seemest brave as an eagle, my pet," said the young lady, smoothing the ruffled plumage, the bird meanwhile proudly lifting up her head, and raising her feathers, as though exultant over her victory.

A merry ride home along the shady road completed the day's enjoyment; much clouded, however, to Maude, when she thought alone of the piercing cries of the hunted heron.

Close to the Lady Maude's jennet, throughout the day, had rode Wilfred the page, eagerly treasuring every light word spoken to him personally, to dream at night of the bright smile with which she had thanked him, as he aided her to dismount at the entrance to the castle.

NOTE. It is but proper to state that the main features of this hawking expedition have been gathered from Sir Walter Scott.

## CHAPTER III.

### GAY BESIEGERS.

SEPTEMBER has passed, and now the purple tint of the hills has faded into russet gray. The young demoiselles are elated with the thought of a birthday banquet,— Eveline for the glitter and the merry-making; Maude that, perchance, it bringeth Guy and Alice to Ravenscliff.

"What sayest thou, good mother?" said Eveline; "wilt strike hands that I bring not Guy and Alice to the banquet?"

The Lady Jaqueline smiled, as she replied:

"Thou hast strange power over the grim Baron of Hawksworth, Eveline; but there is my wager," laying, at the same time, a diamond ring upon the table.

"There layeth mine," replied the maiden, gayly, throwing an embroidered veil over the lady's face. "Ye are all witnesses, demoiselles."

It is a gay party that is seen trotting out over the ballium, through the gate, and crossing the drawbridge; the last word greeting Eveline's ear as her father waved adieu:

"Success attend the gay besiegers of the Baron of Hawksworth."

Eveline waved her riding-whip, and tossed her gay plumes, as she bowed her graceful head in reply.

Lancelot, Maude, Eveline, and Wilfred d'Arcy, the ladies' page, headed the cavalcade, followed by a dozen men-at-arms; for such a thing was never heard of in those rude days as ladies travelling unattended. Passing by many of the plain dwellings of the Saxon gentry, and the rude huts of the peasantry, we find them at the close of the day, after a ride of twenty miles, on the borders of a deep forest that belonged to the domain of Hawksworth, where the sports of the chase were frequently enjoyed.

"We must ride on the borders of the wood," said Lancelot; "for wild animals abound here, an' I trow that we be not prepared for hunting."

"Hist!" said Eveline. "What stirreth in the bushes?"

In the next minute, a gallant deer suddenly started out of the deep brushwood, and fixing her startled eyes one moment upon the company, with one swift bound darted into the thick wood, and was speedily lost to sight.

"What a splendid creature!" said Wilfred. "Shall we pursue her?"

"I trow not," was Lancelot's reply. "We should have the baron's wrath about our ears in a trice."

Emerging from the forest, the dark towers of Hawksworth were in sight. Not so extensive as Ravenscliff, we see another cause of the envy of the more prosperous baron on the neighboring estate.

A summons at the portcullis brought an answer from the warder, who speedily admitted the party, soon joined in the

inner ballium by the baron himself. The spirit of chivalry so far controlled the knight as to make his reception courteous, if not cordial. Accordingly, we find the baron gallantly aiding Eveline to dismount, and leading the party forward into the castle, where we find Guy and the Lady Alice ready to extend a joyous welcome.

"It hath been a long season syth we clasped hands in this old castle, Maude," said Guy de Mowbray, "an' I feared that thou wouldst not come again; but the old years seem blotted out, and we stand in the sunshine of childhood once more."

Just then Wilfred d'Arcy advanced to the baron, extending the invitation on the point of a small silver-hilted dagger.

A slight shade passed over his face, as he replied:

"The Baron of Ravenscliff careth not for my presence, forsooth!"

"Thou deniest not the Lady Alice and Blanche and Guy?" said Eveline.

"I promise naught rashly," was the reply; "but let us hasten to the Lady Edith," whom they found in the banqueting-hall, with Blanche de Lacy, an orphan child of a deceased sister of the Lady of Hawksworth. Very frail and lovely was the little maiden, who, although sixteen years of age, appeared no more than twelve, so small, so fragile, was the child, with a skin fair as a lily, eyes blue as the sky, and, most remarkable of all, a wealth of flaxen hair that enveloped her as a golden veil. Timid, sensitive, shrinking, she stood aside for some minutes ere noticed by the visitors.

"Art a real fairy, Blanche," said Eveline, as she kissed the fair cheek. "Why, thou hast not grown an inch, methinks, syth last we played 'hunt the slipper' in the old hall on Christmas Eve."

"Thou mistakest, Lady Eveline," was the reply of the little maiden, with an air of offended dignity; "for none of my kirtles and tunics fit me now that were large enow then, forsooth!"

The Lady Edith gave a cordial greeting; but the three touched the thin, pale hand with feelings of pain, as they looked at the wasted form of the Lady of Hawksworth A plentiful repast was soon spread in the banqueting-hall, and the weary party did ample justice to the refreshment,—by no means a tea-drinking of modern times; for real substantial fare was heartily enjoyed by the Norman ladies of those feudal days.

The Baron of Hawksworth was fond of the chase, and finding Eveline willing to listen, he entertained her with a tedious account of a deer hunt that had just come off with great success; Lancelot and Maude smiling at the grave decorum and absorbing interest with which Eveline appeared to listen, and the baron himself highly flattered by the young damsel's attention to his story.

"There hang the horns," said the baron, proudly, pointing to a set of fine antlers that were suspended over the door of entrance to the hall.

Then came the music to enliven the evening; for Eveline intended this as the battery with which to storm the baron. She played delightfully on the lute, accompanying it with

a very sweet, musical voice, and song after song was called for by the baron, who unbent to none other as to Eveline de Vere. Then came several trios, in which Lancelot joined his sisters; and the baron said, as he bade good-night:

"Truly the minstrels may hang up their harps on the walls in this presence."

"A guerdon from the Knight of Hawksworth," said Eveline, with a mischievous smile upon her face; "thou deniest not to young demoiselles what thou givest to the minstrels, I trow."

"What wouldst thou, damsel? Make thy request quickly, and thou shalt have it."

"Dost promise that I have my wish?"

"Thou hearest the word of honor of a true knight, Lady Eveline."

"A small boon, Sir Knight; only that the Lady Alice, Blanche de Lacy, and Guy return with us to the banquet."

The countenance of the baron fell; but he replied:

"Thou hast my word. A true knight falleth not from that."

The baron closed the door as he passed out, and Eveline, with a light, silvery laugh, said:

"Saidst I not so? Fairly surrendered! The ring falleth to me of a truth."

In a day or two, we find them on their return to Ravenscliff, and entering the ballium. The Lady Jaqueline hastened to meet them at the entrance.

"Thou winnest the ring, Eveline," said the mother, as she placed the jewel on the slender finger.

"That were a small boon, good mother, an' it were not for the merry guests that come to the castle, and stay with us two weeks."

We find the reunited friends out in the pleasance, — a garden around the castle, — enjoying a stroll along the path on the south side, which, for a long distance, was shaded by elms, whose branches, meeting over the walk, formed a complete arbor of delight.

It is true that the fresh winds of early autumn swept through the rich foliage, murmuring of the fading loveliness of nature, and that some of the birds had already taken wing for a warmer climate, some few remaining yet to warble their sweet songs.

At the extreme end of this long alcove was a small building, which we would call a summer-house, covered with a rich drapery of vines, a favorite retreat for the dwellers in the castle when seeking retirement; and here we find Guy and Maude, while the remainder were enjoying the out-door games common among the nobility.

Maude had brought her cithern, and entertained her companion with some of her favorite music.

"Thy music is wondrous sweet, Maude," said the young esquire; "but, soothly, it seemeth to breathe the air of heaven more than earth, I trow."

"In the abbey of St. Agnes there lacketh not time for thought; and many a quiet hour in the lonely cloister, or under the shade of the grand old trees, there come solemn dreams of the secrets of another world: there be much to

bewilder, Guy, when alone with our strange fancies, and naught to answer the questions of our own spirits."

"Thou needest not puzzle thysel' about hard things, Maude; the Church telleth all that we need."

The young girl smiled, as she replied:

"How little thou knowest, Guy, what deep thoughts lie in some human hearts that would know more of God our Father! There be naught in our breviary that bringeth us near to him; and all that Father Ambrose or the prioress of St. Agnes tell me only frighteth me; for God cometh to me always with a rod that punisheth, and that layeth upon us sharp penances, or pointeth us to the fires of purgatory. That is all that come from our teachers and our book; but when the flowers smile, and the happy birds sing, when the trees bend with their fruits, and the ground teemeth with food of all kinds, it seemeth, Guy, an' it must be a God that loveth us, who taketh such fatherly care of his children; but, then, Guy, we seem not like these, for we be sinners in so many ways. Oh! Guy, how my heart wondereth! and there be none to answer these questions, that kept me awake many a weary hour in the night season."

"Thou seemest ever a strange child, Maude, even when a little demoiselle, sitting with thy brown eyes bent upon the ground, and thy hands folded on thy lap, while thy sister Eveline sporteth like a merry lark."

"Sometimes, Guy, in the chapel, there come such solemn thoughts, as the names of brave knights and noble ladies pass before me,—the dead who sleep there; and visions come of the long life that waiteth for us all when our short day

on earth endeth. There be some, Guy, that reach not the Urbs Beata. What an' we should come short of the heavenly city?"

"Thou, Maude? Tut, tut, thou troublest thysel' like unto a sely demoiselle, methinketh. Come; seest thou that merry company? an' thou joinest the sports out there the vapors vanish, I trow."

But the games under the elms quench not the aspirations of Maude de Vere; for was she not one of the hidden ones whom the Good Shepherd will find and bring home to the green pastures of his grace? Surrounded by feudal grandeur, where the things of this life engrossed every thought, with no teaching but the priest and the breviary, no worship but the showy ceremonial of the Romish Church, leading away from Jesus, and planting the germinals of positive error. Maude de Vere was, nevertheless, all unconscious to herself, approaching a spiritual sisterhood, — that great body of believers, who, in every age, have fought the good fight of faith; some in dens and caves of the earth, some hidden in mountain fastnesses, some in the catacombs of Rome, others even in dissolute courts, some immured in convents, and Maude in a feudal castle in mediæval days, the instrument of light in the sacristy of Father Ambrose.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BEDE'S GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

EVELINE is engrossed with female employments, music and embroidery filling up her time; but Maude is searching for higher things, consequently we find her diligent in her attendance upon the services in the chapel; and the most frequent at confession, for she knew of no better way.

Always welcome at the sacristy, we will join her there one day after confession.

Her attention is attracted toward a small book lying upon the table in the friar's apartment. She lifted it up, unclasped the volume, and turning to Father Ambrose an eager face, said:

"Whence cometh this holy book, father?"

"It hath been a long season hidden away, Maude."

"The Gospel of St. John!" said the young lady, as she read the title. "I wot that he is highly blessed who owneth God's own book."

"There be not many copies of the same, daughter; only a few owned by the priests of the Holy Church."

"Who wrote this in English, father?"

"The venerable Bede, a holy monk that liveth in a mon-

astery at Durham, more than four hundred years agone,—a monk of rare wisdom, who spendeth his days in study and writing, and finisheth the holy book on the day of his death, and as he writeth the last word he saith: 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' and then he expireth."

"What give I not, father, an' I might read the holy Gospel."

"Thou couldst not know it, Maude; the book containeth words too hard for womankind."

"I pray thee, holy father, an' thou lendest it to me, thou hast furmety and pottage and good ale to thy heart's content; an' thou wilt?"

These were tempting bribes to the friar, who replied:

"I trow it harmeth thee not, daughter; thou likest strange things for a young demoiselle, but thou mayest take it for a season."

"Thanks, father; the Holy Virgin bless thee for thy goodness."

Maude hastened away with her treasure; and now where should she read it undisturbed?

There was no light in her sleeping closet, no quiet corner in the room where the Lady Jaqueline sat daily with her damsels at their embroidery; but she thought of the little room far away in the highest part of a turret, used in times of siege as a lookout for a sentinel, and thither she hastened.

It was a small room, uncarpeted, of course, but well lighted; but there were rude accommodations in the fireplace for heating it in winter.

"A fitting place!" thought Maude, as she stood a moment at the casement, looking out upon the lovely landscape.

So very high, it commanded a view of the country around for many miles, large tracts of which were covered with grand forests, the homes of the Saxon gentry, and the huts of the peasants dotting the landscape, while the river, which bounded the castle on the east, wound its gentle way through a lovely region of country.

"Anigh to heaven," thought Maude, as she looked up at the calm blue sky; "so far from the din of vanity and lightness below."

Drawing up a rude table and an equally rude seat, she placed herself near the open window, for it was not yet cool enough to close the casement.

The book was bound in dark-brown leather, very simple in workmanship, and clasped with two small clasps of common metal washed with silver, the leaves of vellum, written in a clear, small hand; it was legible to one accustomed to read only black letter.

Stops it had none, except a full stop here and there, with no capitals, only occasionally a letter in red ink.

On the front page was a badly-drawn and gaudily-colored illumination of the Virgin and Child.

Maude de Vere was deeply reverential, and with very solemn feelings she opened the sacred volume. Glancing her eye eagerly over the pages, she found that much of it was a revelation from the Lord himself.

Bowing at the table, she crossed herself, and addressed a

prayer to the Virgin; but that did not express the language of her heart.

"Lord Jesus, teach thou me!" burst from her lips, as, with clasped hands, she raised her eyes to heaven.

Strange things were in the book, such as she had never read before.

The Romish breviary was the only book that, as a guide to heaven, Maude de Vere had ever read.

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Wondrous words! Why, Maude had been taught fear only became a sinner in approaching God, who thus far was known only as a stern, vindictive judge.

"In my Father's house are many mansions."

"Precious name! Father! How can I make him mine?" whispered the earnest reader. "Many mansions! Oh! can there be one for Maude de Vere?"

Maude read on, wondering more and more; for no prayer to the Virgin, no invocation to the saints was there; not a word of penance, nor confession, nor the holy mass; and she had been taught such a different way. But, then, was it not the voice of the Church? and was not the Church commissioned from heaven? But suppose that they did not speak alike! were both infallible?

How could that be? If the Church says one thing, and God's word another, which must be believed? How could the Church be wrong? Was it not the repository of God's truth? But how could the blessed apostles be wrong in writing the very words of Christ? This seemed solid rock. At one time she thought that nothing could contradict the

Church, and then that nothing could supersede the words of God himself.

Maude concluded that she would read for herself, keep close to God's word, and pray for light.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Obedience to the Church, humility, penance, works, but Christ never! — these were all that she had ever been taught of the will of God.

All that she knew of the Lord Jesus were historical facts, — the story of the nativity, the fasting in the wilderness, the crucifixion, and the resurrection; and whenever the Saviour was present before her mental vision, it was as one crowned with thorns, bleeding on Calvary, and then the dread image of Christ in judgment. But these were all as dramas! His offices, his blessed work as the *One Saviour*, without any other mediator of virgin, holy saint, or earthly priest, of this she yet knew nothing; but still she read, and still she prayed.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in *my* name, that will *I* do;" but not one word of whatever ye shall ask Saint Basil or Saint Agnes, did that earnest reader see in all these holy pages.

Maude's heart was deeply stirred; well described in the account of the first creation, the same agent operating in the second:

"And darkness was upon the face of the deep.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Chaos was troubled, moving, stirring; but there is an

hour in the history of every redeemed soul when God says: "Let there be light!"

This first reading was a hasty, eager glimpse of wonders that were all new to Maude; and, bringing out her breviary, she resolved to compare the two, taking subjects separately, and placing them side by side with the Gospel.

Time flew by without her consciousness; for there was a knock at the door, and Wilfred d'Arcy presented himself.

"The Lady Jaqueline sendeth for thee, Lady Maude," said the page. "The damsels be assembled long time in the 'broiderie room."

"Make my devoir to my good mother, Wilfred. I will be there anon; but I wish that I might tarry in this turret all the live-long day, for I have blessed company."

The page looked surprised at the young lady, wondering at her words; but he could well imagine that she entertained the angels, for he had long regarded her as akin to those blessed spirits.

The page tarried behind until the Lady Maude passed out, and, as her light figure disappeared, he stooped to pick up a flower that she had dropped from her girdle; kissing it reverently, he placed it away in the bosom of his doublet; for each day the page was yielding up his heart to the sweet dreams of early youth,— dreams seldom realized.

Wilfred was not only an orphan, but literally alone in the wide, wide world: at a very early age, therefore, being the son of a brother-in-arms, the good Baron of Ravenscliff had brought him to the castle, and, as was the custom, during the

days of childhood, was entirely under the care and instruction of the ladies.

There was much to admire in the youthful page,—personal attractions, gifts and graces especially pleasing to the ladies, fondness for music, gallantry, and bravery; for although clothed in a slight, delicate frame, there was much of the chivalric spirit in Wilfred d'Arcy.

Maude's tender heart was especially interested in the orphan boy, and from the days of childhood he had been surrounded by all those gentle influences which have such power over those early days of romance. The Lady Maude was therefore Wilfred's divinity, at whose shrine the enthusiastic page almost worshipped.

He had nearly passed through the discipline of the page, and was almost ready for the second grade of chivalry.

But we will follow Maude to the 'broiderie room, where we find her, with a deeply occupied mind, among the gay young damsels, very silent and abstracted, for a new and absorbing subject of interest engrossed her thoughts.

The Lady Jaqueline was aware that her thoughtful daughter was very different from the gay and brilliant Eveline; but she knew not what it was that shaded the bright young face, or why it was that Maude so frequently lay down her embroidery needle, gazing into space with those earnest dark-brown eyes.

"Thy work lingereth, Maude," said the mother. "Christmas will be upon us ere it cometh from the frame."

"I cry thee mercy, good mother," was the reply, as, with a blushing face, Maude applied herself to her task.

Strangely alone was the young damsel in that crowd of merry creatures busy over their work, while each contributed her lively sally or sprightly anecdote to enliven the hours in the tapestry room.

Many proofs of their industry were hung all around the walls, decorated richly with fine pieces of embroidery, many of which were historical.

The Lady Jaqueline frequently turned her eyes upon Maude; seeing her continued listlessness, she said, kindly:

"Thou mayest take thy harp, Maude; for I wot that thy mood favoreth sweet sounds to-day more than thy 'broiderie."

Maude obeyed the summons, and, with a voice that silenced every gay spirit, she sang:

"Fierce was the wild billow,
Dark was the night;
Oars labored heavily,
Foam glimmered white;
Mariners trembled —
Peril was nigh;
Then said the God of God:
'Peace! it is I!'

"Ridge of the mountain wave,
Lower thy crest!
Wail of the stormy wind,
Be thou at rest!
Peril can none be,
Sorrow must fly,
Where saith the Light of Light;
'Peace! it is I!'

"Jesus, Deliverer!
Come Thou to me!
Soothe Thou my voyaging
Over life's sea!
Thou, when the storm of death
Roars, sweeping by,
Whisper, O Truth of Truth,
'Peace! it is I!'"

"How cometh it, Maude, that thou lovest these old hymns?" asked the Lady Jaqueline; "one looketh for such like music in the convents among the cloistered nuns, and not among gay young demoiselles."

Maude smiled, as she replied:

"We wot not how soon we be among the citizens of the holy city, good mother, an' it seemeth that we ought to be in tune to join that blessed music."

Seeking Father Ambrose after even song, Maude was full of questions.

"The book teacheth not like the breviary, father. Which obeyeth good Christians?"

"The Holy Church is the expounder of Holy Writ, daughter; her true children listen to her voice only."

"But an' she speaketh against God's word, what then, father?"

"The Lord Jesus saith, 'Lo, I am with you alway, to the end of the world.' He speaketh those words to his church, in which dwelleth the Spirit in all ages; so that the words spoken by the true Church be just as truly God's as

the words of the holy apostles, for the Holy Church never goeth astray."

"But it seemeth, father, that the apostles nearest to our Lord know more of his blessed will."

"Keep close to the Holy Church, Maude; that is God's only interpreter of Holy Writ."

"I pray thee, father, tell me one thing: is this really God's own book?"

"Just as truly as the sun shineth in the heavens, daughter."

"Then it is sent to Maude de Vere as truly as to the priests; for an' the sun shineth over the whole earth, the Gospel shineth for all, too."

The words of Father Ambrose quieted not the spirit of Maude de Vere; for, written in the Lamb's book of life, it had started on its journey to the heavenly city, and was in truth one of those to whom the blessed promise belonged: "Lo, I am with you alway."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE YULE LOG.

THE autumn months pass rapidly by. Maude is obliged to close the casement of her turret; for the keen, sharp winds of the last fall month whistle sometimes shrilly around the high tower: but Wilfred is very watchful of the young demoiselle, and on the first indication of frost, has seen that the fireplace is well provided with good logs. Owing to his care, she finds her little sanctum always comfortable, when she is ready to occupy her chair. She is busily engaged now in copying the blessed Gospel; for she fears that Father Ambrose may recall it; and Maude is not only studying and copying the precious book, but is committing every word to memory.

"Wouldst know what I am doing, Wilfred?" said the young lady, one day, seeing him linger in the turret.

"It seemeth passing strange how thou writest so bravely, lady," was the reply.

"Thou wottest not what blessed words my pen traceth: the words of our Lord, Wilfred; for this is, in sooth, the Gospel of St. John."

Bending over the table, the page replied:

"Thou writest brave letters, lady; fair as the monks, I ween. No other lady sayeth that, I trow."

"Wouldst like to read, Wilfred?" inquired the young scribe.

The page turned his blue eyes upon the face of the maiden, as he replied:

"An' thou wouldst teach me, lady, I would bless thee more than tongue can tell."

"Then thou readest the true gospel, Wilfred," she replied; "and thou wouldst have blessed company in thy lonely hours. Step in here every day, just one half hour, and I will teach thee. Come, now; let us have our first lesson."

Maude brought out one of her first books, and the page seated himself by her side.

Not accustomed to any mental effort, the children of our day would have been surprised to see what a labor was this first lesson for a youth of nineteen; but Maude was patient, and Wilfred persevering, and there was a charm in his young teacher's voice that insinuated its lessons slowly, but surely, into the undisciplined mind of the student. The lesson ended, Maude gave kind words of encouragement.

"It seemeth not so hard, good Wilfred, after thou hast a few more lessons; but thou hadst better take the book and study for thyself. But come daily, and thou readest the Gospel for thyself ere many months."

"It, perhaps, is too much trouble, lady."

"Think not so, good Wilfred; it is a pleasant task."

A new light had dawned upon the path of the lonely orphan, and it needed no second invitation; for the page was found daily by the side of his young teacher, who rewarded his efforts by reading the Gospel to him after each

lesson, after which we find him seated by a porthole at the end of the corridor, conning the task of the day.

Maude had found work in her turret, and, like a true disciple of the Lord, rejoiced to tell what she knew of the Master. Her own interest in the Gospel is daily on the increase, the sweet English poetess expressing all:

"And there is something in this book
That makes all care be gone;
And yet I weep — I know not why —
As I go reading on!"

None in that old castle, save Wilfred, knew of the work so diligently pursued in the lonely turret; but Maude had companions, though she knew it not, — those angelic messengers, so deeply interested in man's redemption, and the Holy Spirit, whose presence she had daily invoked since she had read:

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do."

"For," said Maude, "there is no gift so precious as the Holy Spirit, an' for that aboon all things I pray."

We leave Maude in her quiet turret at her holy employment, and descend awhile to the lower rooms of the keep.

Although the young esquires and pages pursue their military exercises, as usual, in the tilt-yard, the sharp winds of December oblige them to resort to in-door sports in that inclement season.

There are many in those old feudal times, especially in the winter, when there is almost an uninterrupted round of

jollity and feasting, commencing on Christmas Eve, and ending on Twelfth Day.

Many of those old customs are doubtless derived from pagan rites and ceremonies, retained after the conversion of the Britons to Christianity; the teachers finding it impossible, at that early period, to wean them entirely from these old superstitions.

They were, therefore, engrafted upon the Christian customs to render the religion of the cross more palatable. Of such is the burning of the Yule Log and the hanging of the mistletoe-bough, which may be traced, the one to the old Druids, the other to the Scandinavians.

But Christmas Eve is here. It is a genuine winter; for there has been a fall of snow, and the ground is covered with a white mantle.

The banqueting-hall is decorated with holly, bay, rosemary, and laurel; the mistletoe-bough is hung on the ceiling, and the old ceremony of bringing in the Yule Log has commenced.

The huge chimney has been well swept, and the inhabitants of the keep are in waiting for the arrival of the Yule.

We will join the company out of doors on this cold December night.

The retainers of the Baron of Ravenscliff were out in large numbers; for well they knew that for two weeks the castle would be open to all, and that a profuse hospitality was always dispensed on this joyous occasion. There lies the huge old Yule, a ponderous block, in its resting-place at the feet of its brethren of the woods.

Now begins the ceremony of drawing it to the castle. A large number head the procession, who lay hold upon the strong rope, and another band push the mammoth log from behind.

Each wayfarer raises his hat and salutes it heartily as it passes by; for he knows that it is full of good promises, that its flame would burn out old wrongs and heart-burnings, and cause the liquor to bubble in the wassail bowl that was quaffed to the drowning of ancient feuds.

On went the old log amid the shouts and cheers of the outsiders; and now it has reached the drawbridge; and as it passes in, the warder blows his horn from his tower, the trumpets take up the welcome, and a crowd of the dwellers in the old castle rush to the walls, cheering the old Yule as it passed over the ballium; the minstrels hail its arrival with a hearty song as the log is borne into the hall and laid upon the huge fireplace. A portion of last year's log was already there, and in a short time the flames roared up the great chimney, lighting the immense hall, aided by the huge Christmas candle called the Yule candle; large torches, also, borne in the hands, making a perfect blaze of light.

This is a period when distinctions in rank are all laid aside, and the peasantry receive a hearty welcome from the ladies of the castle.

A spirit of jollity inspired all the company; and there was a burst of hearty laughter when the Lady Eveline found herself obliged to pay the usual forfeit to a Saxon, who arrested her footsteps under the mistletoe-bough. Others fol-

lowed her example; but there were some doubts as to the unpremeditated character of the capture.

It was a season of uproarious revelry, and at the hospitable board many an old feud was buried forever over the wassail bowl, as, decked with ribbons, it passed gayly around among the guests, — none stopping to think that the revels around future wassail bowls might engender other feuds, — the temperance idea not yet having dawned upon the world.

Many old games were participated in by the whole company; some, perhaps, which our children are accustomed to enjoy in more modern days, for, if we are not mistaken, the game of "blind-man's-buff" is as old as the feudal castles.

"The children are passing over the drawbridge," said Wilfred, to the company in the great hall.

Knowing what sweet carols they often sang, the crowd inside took their stand within hearing of the little ones, who by this time were out in the darkness, only visible by the light of the lanterns.

Very sweet and touching was the old carol that they piped out for the baron and his family, accompanied by two musical instruments well played; the words having no claim to literary merit, only to be admired for the simplicity and melody of the ballad.

"And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas-day in the morning.

"And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas-day in the morning.

"And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas-day in the morning.

"Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas-day in the morning."

As soon as the carol was ended, the good baron headed the procession, and brought them into the great hall, carrying a pine torch in one hand and a green bough in the other.

Many a bright glance and hearty laugh welcomed the quaint little girlish figures bashfully gliding in, wrapped up in mother's large bonnet and shawl, that trailed upon the ground; the boys equally droll beneath hats that covered neck and shoulders, and coats that hung upon their little frames like bags, and touching the shoetops, none brave enough to encounter the winter winds in their scanty clothing.

Leading the shy little things to the table, the baron waited upon them himself, loading them with plenty of Christmas cheer, and giving them a generous donation in

money; the children of Saxons and Normans mingling freely together on Christmas Eve.

Out upon the ground before the castle they sang another old carol, accompanying it this time with the ringing of staffs of small bells, and then bade farewell.

"The good baron giveth us a jolly gooding," said the eldest boy.

"We 'll keep a merry feast on Twelfth Night," said the little girl who walked next to the speaker.

"What hideth little Bess?" said another, pointing to a very small child lingering in the rear.

"A gooding for gammer," replied the child. "She is too old to go to the castle; an' I ate not a crumb of my Christmas cake."

Singing their joyous carols, the children passed on to visit other mansions on their way home. Sweet Christmas carols! beautifully alluded to by quaint old Jeremy Taylor, when referring in his "Great Exemplar" to the Gloria in Excelsis, or hymn sung by the angels over the plains of Bethlehem. He says: "As soon as those blessed choristers had sung the Christmas carol, and taught the church a hymn to put in her offices forever on the anniversary of this festivity, the angels returned into heaven."

And so we find that the angels were the first who sang a Christmas carol, more than eighteen hundred years ago.

The childish choristers had scarcely passed out, ere a more noisy crew entered, — a company of mummers, who, from time immemorial, had been in the habit of acting out the time-honored legend of St. George and the dragon.

The actors were chiefly young lads, in costume proper to the allegorical characters which they represented, claiming admittance as St. George and his merry men.

After the grotesque drama had ended, they too claimed their Christmas guerdon, in quaint, old rhymes hundreds of years old.

"Ladies and gentlemen,
Our story is ended;
Our money-box is commended,
Five or six shillings will not do us harm;
Silver, or copper, or gold, if you can."

There were many superstitions in those olden times,— some coarse and offensive,— but the most beautiful is that which represents a thorough prostration of the Prince of Darkness as taking place, when it was said that no evil influence could be exerted upon mankind.

The cock is said to crow all night long, and by his vigilance to keep off evil spirits.

It is beautifully expressed by Shakspeare in the play of Hamlet:

"It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

A belief still lingers in some quarters that at midnight on Christmas Eve the cattle in their stalls fall down on their knees in adoration of the infant Saviour, as the older legend reports of those at Bethlehem on the night of the nativity.

Bees, too, are said to sing in their hives at the same time. All nature was thus supposed to rejoice in the birth of the world's Redeemer.

To us, the uproarious revelry of the olden times seems but illy to comport with the religious joy which ought to fill the hearts of Christians at the recurrence of these sacred anniversaries; but there were some things even then to be commended; for it was at that season that benevolence was most abundant, old friendships renewed, old quarrels healed, and charity evoked.

The poor and destitute shared the Christmas bounty; from the throne down through all classes contributing their mite in keeping the festival that declareth "peace on earth, and good-will toward men."

On this occasion, however, the joy at Ravenscliff was somewhat lessened by the positive refusal of the Baron of Hawksworth to join in their festivities; for when such denials came, they were received as renewed declarations of enmity.

Still, as this untoward circumstance affected but a small circle, Sir Walter Scott's lines may well apply to the island kingdom in the olden times.

"England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale:
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BRAVE DAYS OF OLD.

THOUGH a time of unrestrained revelry, when all the inhabitants of the castle were bent only upon present enjoyment, Maude forsook not her turret, nor her book.

We find her daily, at the early morning hour, pondering over the blessed volume, and drinking in, as at a pure fountain, the water of life. As she learned more and more of the spirituality of true religion, her worship in the chapel assumed a different phase, though the forms appeared the same.

When others offered adoration to the Virgin, or implored the intercession of the saints, Maude's spirit held communion with the Saviour of sinners; for, obeying the call of the Master himself, and sitting at his feet, she was learning of him.

Wilfred the page is often found tarrying a few minutes in the turret, deeply interested in the work of the Lady Maude, and occasionally dropping a word about passing events.

"Didst wot of my visit to the grim Baron of Hawksworth?" said the youth.

"When didst see the baron?" inquired Maude.

"But a fortnight syth the Lord of Ravenscliff sendeth me with a generous summons to the Christmas keeping; but the denial seemeth not only discourteous as a knight, but of ill omen as an enemy."

"It grieveth me, Wilfred, sorely," replied Maude; "for it speaketh of bad blood toward our good father; and he deserveth it not."

"When an enemy refuseth the drowning of feuds in the wassail bowl, at this season, it showeth dark, revengeful plots in the secrets of the heart, Lady Maude."

"It grieveth me in two ways, Wilfred; for it keepeth the others away from Ravenscliff at last, I trow."

Wilfred is an earnest student, and now that he has actually read his first lesson without help, we find Maude rejoicing over their mutual triumph.

"Saidst I not so, good Wilfred, that thou wouldst soon read the Gospel?"

"These be very small words, lady; not one have I read yet in the book."

Maude smiled, and, opening the Gospel, pointed to the blessed words, which, slowly, Wilfred read.

"I am — the way, — the truth, — and — the life: — no man," — and there he was obliged to stop, — "cometh unto the Father, but by me," continued Maude. "Knowest thou what that meaneth, good Wilfred? It telleth us that by Jesus only, and not by saints, and penances, and works, do we reach the heavenly city."

"Blessed wilt thou be in that holy place, Lady Maude; for thou art my guide all the way, I trow."

Respectfully he took the little hand within his own, and pressing a light kiss upon its surface, he passed out, leaving Maude sitting thoughtfully by her table.

She regarded the lonely page with the tender affection of a sister, and this sudden outburst on his part had disturbed the quiet nature of their intercourse. And on his own part, we find him seated by his little loophole in the corridor, looking out upon the winter landscape, thinking of the fair young damsel in the turret, and of the time when Guy should bear away the prize; for he had read truly the nature of the tie that bound the two. No woman's heart throbbed with the interest of kindred for the page, — neither mother, sister, nor aunt claimed him as their own; for all slept quietly under the green sod of the valley.

The wintry winds moaned sadly through the long corridor, and their melancholy music was in harmony with Wilfred's spirit; for he had learned of late how hopelessly he loved the Lady Maude de Vere.

The customs of those days, though coarse and unrefined, were yet marked by a hearty hospitality; for during these holidays, the barons and knights kept open house for a fortnight or more, when nothing was heard but jollity and feasting.

The grand feast, however, given by the feudal chieftain to his friends and retainers, took place with great pomp and display on Christmas-day.

After the morning mass was said, the ladies were occupied chiefly in preparing for dinner.

Very busy and eager were the youthful crowd assembled

in the Lady Jaqueline's room to discuss the toilet of the day, the lady of the castle guiding their choice. The heavy winter colors of crimson, rich green, and deep blue seemed to win the day, and rich embroideries of gold or miniver for trimmings. The general lack of intellectual culture might, perhaps, excuse the all-engrossing love of female display witnessed in that feudal castle; but what shall we say of the present devotion to the same vanities, where, in some extreme cases, a style as grotesque as in those ancient days prevails now?

We fear that it must stamp woman as essentially vain and frivolous in all ages of the world; but this we know, that where the heart is supremely fixed upon better things, it is very easy to obey the apostolic rule concerning dress.

We will take our seat a moment, apart from the gay company, and study the picture.

There is a bright butterfly, marked by her blue eyes and profusion of light hair, flitting around, sparkling, laughing, and chattering with two or three others quite as merry as herself.

"It shall be the rich green tunic and the rose-colored kirtle," said the young demoiselle; "for that becometh me most."

The other young ladies looked on with envious eyes at the richly-embroidered suit, glittering with gold. But who is that leaning on the table, near the Lady Jaqueline, listening so quietly to that lady's directions?

We admire the gay young creatures; but we turn again to that sweetly thoughtful face, so manifestly "in the world,

but not of the world;" for Maude de Vere is a citizen of another, that is a heavenly, country.

"Just as thou sayest, mother mine," said the young lady, as she laid down the suit chosen by her mother.

The robing accomplished, there was the signal for dinner.

Heralded by a flourish of trumpets, and accompanied by the strains of minstrels, the sewer entered the banqueting-hall, carrying the great dish of the feast — the boar's head — on a salver of silver; — for no meaner metal could answer, — followed by a stately procession of nobles, knights, and ladies, the sewer singing:

"Caput, apri defero,
Reddens, laudes Domino.
The boar's head in hand bring I,
With garlands gay, and rosemary;
I pray you all sing merrily,
Qui estis in convivio.
The boar's head, I understand,
Is the chief service in this land;
Look wherever it be found,
Servite, cum cantico.
Be glad, both more and less;
For this hath ordained our steward,
To cheer you all this Christmas —
The boar's head and mustard!
Caput, apri defero,
Reddens, laudes Domino."

The brawner's head was then placed upon the table with solemn gravity. Sweet rosemary and bays were spread

around the dish; in his great tusks a large pippin was placed, with sauce abundantly seasoned with mustard, the latter indispensable. Then the guests and members of the household were seated according to their rank, those of the highest on the dais, over which were suspended the banners of France and England; for two French knights, lately returned from Palestine, were the most honored guests. A number of seats were yet vacant, evidently reserved for ladies who were not present; for a very imposing part of the ceremonies yet remained to be performed, — the placing of the peacock upon the table. To prepare this bird for the feast was no small task. Carefully stripped off, with the plumage adhering, the bird was then roasted; when done and partially cooled, sewed up again in its feathers, its beak being gilt before sent to the table. Sometimes the whole body was covered with gold leaf, and a piece of cotton saturated with spirits placed in its beak, and lighted before the carver commenced operations. The bird was stuffed with spices and sweet herbs, basted with yelks of eggs, and served with plenty of rich gravy.

At tournaments, the bird was usually served in a pie, at one end of which his plumed crest appeared above the crust, while at the other, his tail was unfolded in all its glory. The noble bird was not served by common hands, that privilege being reserved for the lady guests most distinguished by birth or beauty. On this occasion, the Lady Geraldine de Courcy headed the procession, attired with a magnificence becoming a princess of royal blood. To her, as the queen of beauty, was appointed the honor of carrying

the dish, to the sound of music, the rest of the ladies following in due order, glittering with rich jewels. As the ladies entered, the guests already seated arose, while the music continued discoursing sweet sounds until the bearer of the dish had set it down before the Knight of the Red Cross, the most distinguished of the brave guests, and then all took their appointed seats at the board.

It must have been in compliment to a guest that any lady could have been said to excel in beauty and grace Maude and Eveline de Vere, in their elegant apparel. Maude's intellectual and spiritual beauty, and Eveline's brilliant and fascinating appearance, certainly had no rivals around the Christmas board; the blush of maiden modesty enhancing the charms of each. But in those rude days female loveliness did not draw off attention from the feast spread out before the company.

But there were some remarkable guests scattered around the room; for dogs were privileged characters, and we find not a few under the table, near their masters' feet, waiting for their share of the feast; for they were allowed to search for the bones among the rushes, and none appeared to think them intruders there. Think of dogs at a modern dinner-party!

Geese, capons, pheasants dressed with ambergris, and pies of carps' tongues, helped to furnish the table in bygone Christmases; but there was one national dish which was held indispensable. This was furmety, concocted, according to the most ancient formula extant, on this wise:

"Take clean wheat, and bray it in a mortar, that the

hulls be all gone off, and seethe it till it burst, and take it up and let it cool; and take clean, fresh broth, and sweet milk of almonds, or sweet milk of kine, and temper it all, and take the yelks of eggs. Boil it a little, and set it down, and mess it forth with fat venison or fresh mutton."

Furmety, sweetened with sugar, was a favorite dish of itself; the clean broth being omitted when a lord was to be the partaker.

Mince-pies were indispensable, and plum-porridge was always served with the first course of a Christmas dinner. It was made by boiling beef or mutton with broth thickened with brown bread. When half boiled, raisins, currants, prunes, cloves, mace, and ginger were added, and, when all was thoroughly boiled, sent to table with the best meats. The friends of temperance will be grieved to read what a carolist of the thirteenth century says about the liquor at Christmas feasts; for his song certainly indicates great license given to the dangerous appetite.

"Lordlings, Christmas loves good drinking,
Wines of Gascoigne, Florence, Anjou;
English ale that drives out thinking, —
Prince of liquors, old or new.
Every neighbor shares the bowl,
Drinks of spicy liquor deep;
Drinks his fill without control,
Till he drowns his care in sleep."

The great baronial hall presented truly an exciting picture, heavily dressed with holly, bay, and laurel, the great

Yule log sending out its fiery glow over the guests, as it roared up the spacious chimney, the monster Yule candle in some conspicuous place, the numerous torches giving out their blaze of light.

We miss the magnificent curtains and gilt cornices of modern days,—there being, however, hangings of tapestry in their place. No Wilton carpets cover the floor; green rushes being the substitute. The eye looks around in vain for elegantly carved rosewood, or even more sober walnut; the nobles of those early days contenting themselves with long and heavy oaken tables, with seats rude enough in our eyes. Height and space were perhaps the only features of grandeur; even comfort was seldom found in these old feudal castles.

But there was splendor in the dresses of the guests: the ladies and knights in glittering attire; the shields of the latter hanging upon the walls, and banners waving over the table.

At the lower tables there were crowds of the vassals of the popular baron; and the great hall, in all its length, resounded with the inspiring music of the minstrels. Truly this was a season of uproarious mirth and jollity; to modern ears coarse and sensual, indeed.

The ladies retired ere the language and manners of such a revel should offend their delicacy; for they could well imagine what such license given to the appetite would be likely to produce. Ere the revellers departed, one of the Saxon gentry proposed the health of the Baron of Ravenscliff, and drank from the wassail bowl in deep liba-

tions, all pledging themselves to renewed devotion in the service of their feudal lord.

In our times, Christmas day is shorn of its ancient exhibitions of boisterous mirth and jollity. The mummers are no more, the waits have vanished, the lord of misrule has departed, and we should be sorry to see their heathenish sports return; but the sweet Christmas carols are so akin to the angelic choristers on the plains of Judea, that we would fain retain their gentle ministry.

Let us banish far away the heathenish customs, and retain the Christian. The sweet family gatherings around the Christmas board, the interchange of gifts of love, the active deeds of benevolence which the season so beautifully suggests, the dear memories of the past, the joyous hopes of the future; let us have them all in their purity and blessedness at least once a year, when reunited families can join in singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

The mind goes back to those old days, nearly seven hundred years ago, tracing from our present standpoint the centuries on the dial-plate of time, — the centuries of degeneracy and crime, of wickedness and darkness, — on to the blessed days that are coming; and here it seems as if every Christian heart can echo the grand sentiments in Tennyson's beautiful "Ode to the Old Year."

"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light,
The year is dying in the night:
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow,
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

"Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

"Ring out a slowly-dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

"Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out, my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

"Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right;
Ring in the common love of good.

"Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrow lust for gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old;
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

"Ring in the valiant man, and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land;
Ring in the Christ that is to be!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### MAUDE IN THE TWILIGHT.

"Give me the book: oh, let me read!
My soul is strangely stirred:
They are such words of love and truth
As ne'er before I heard."

THESE beautiful lines of sweet Mary Howitt express, in the most touching manner, Maude's emotions in the turret, where she has commenced a deep and earnest study of the blessed Gospel. On bended knees before her little table, we behold the young girl, with heart raised up to heaven for light upon the sacred volume.

She has reached the remarkable conversation between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus, and truly is she filled with wonder.

Maude has had no other idea heretofore of the doctrines of our common faith than those derived from the Romish Church, in which she has been taught that by contact with the ordinances of Christianity she has been made a Christian, and that, in some mysterious manner, she has really eaten the body and blood of our Lord, and is thus incorporated into his church.

But what meaneth all this teaching of our Lord? "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus seemed as much in the dark as Maude; for his questions expressed her own doubts.

"How can a man be born again when he is old?"

"What meaneth the Saviour's answer?" questioned Maude.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

She thinks she comprehends the former clause to allude to baptism; but what meaneth the second condition, "born of the Spirit"? It must mean something that taketh place within. And "what meaneth the kingdom of God? Doth it point to the kingdom of heaven above, or to the church of Christ on earth?" She thinks the latter; for none can become a member of Christ's visible church on earth but by his own method, and that is by baptism. "But, then," Maude continues, "a man may, by baptism, be a member of Christ's church who may not be born of the Spirit;" for her own consciousness declares the fact.

This old feudal castle is filled with members of the church on earth whose lives certainly do not correspond with that description.

She reads slowly on:

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the

sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Maude laid down her book, and, with a soul that sympathized truly with Nicodemus, said: "How can these things be?" So new, so strange, seemed this spiritual doctrine! And yet, in the depths of her heart, Maude felt how true. Clasping her hands in the earnestness of prayerful feeling, she read, with joyful trust:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

"I have found the key," thought Maude; "faith unlocketh the mystery, — faith in the Son of God, faith in the Son of man! Precious words! '*Whosoever* believeth.' Maude de Vere believeth, and, humble as she be, she *hath* eternal life."

Tears rained over the sweet young face, as she continued to read:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The head so deeply bowed, the hands so fervently clasped, were mute expressions of the grasp of faith with which she clung to these blessed promises.

"*Whosoever! whosoever!*" murmured Maude. "Oh, the depth of love! How is it that I have lived so long, and never known the blessedness of the love of God? Can Father Ambrose know it? An' he did, would he lay pen-

ances upon sinful souls? An' he knew it, could he shut the good news up in his own heart?"

Maude remembered the early teachings of the sacristy, where God was made known to her as a hard judge, to be appeased only by fasts and penances and outward services of will worship, by invocations to the saints and to the Virgin; while Jesus, the Son of the Gospel, sat on a distant throne of the universe, enveloped in clouds of superstition which hid his blessed face; for he shone not for Maude de Vere. She remembered, too, the horrible pictures of purgatory, where unhappy souls were represented as writhing in every form of torture which the malice of devils could invent; for many a night she lay awake wondering how much of this anguish she might, perhaps, endure in that gehenna of the Romish Church.

But now it was all so different; for Maude began to feel that a heavenly Father smiled on her when he looked upon her as a believer in his dear Son.

It was a cold, sharp day; but ere she left the turret, she opened the casement to look upward to the wintry sky, and to think of the pathway to the heavenly city, where angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of man. The eye of faith for a brief moment pierced beyond those earthly vapors, and entered that within the veil.

Maude remembered the conduct of Andrew, who, as soon as he had found the Lord, sought out his brother Simon, to tell the good news, and to bring him to Jesus.

Philip, too, as soon as he had found the Messias, sought for Nathaniel, to publish the glad tidings.

"Are there no Andrews, no Simons, no Philips, no Nathaniels here?" questioned Maude, in her new-born interest. The inquiry sank deep into the young heart, as she turned away to join the family circle.

But ere Maude left the turret she locked up in a small closet Father Ambrose's copy of the Gospel and her own manuscript, just completed.

Next day she was surprised by a knock at the door of her sanctum, and, opening it, her brother Lancelot stood before her.

"How didst find me, brother mine?" inquired the young demoiselle.

"I was thrown from my horse to-day, Maude, in the tilting-yard, and I need thy skilful hand to bind up the wound. Thou thinkest that I wot not of thy little turret, Maude; but thy footsteps be all known to thy brother."

Uncovering his right arm, a deep gash was disclosed, just above the elbow, and a modern young lady would have been surprised to see with what coolness Maude examined the wound, and staunched the blood with her pocket-handkerchief. Sounding her silver whistle, she soon summoned the page, who was always within hearing at this hour of the day.

"Hasten, Wilfred, to the surgeon's room, and bring me a basin of cool water, some lint and bandages, and a small instrument to remove the pieces of stone in my brother's wound; but be speedy;" — for the slight bandage being insufficient, the wound was bleeding freely. Very bravely and tenderly did the young operator remove the irritating matter from the

wound, staunch it in cool water, and applying lint and bandaging it skilfully, she kissed her brother fondly, saying:

"Art comfortable, Lancelot?"

"Thou art a skilful leech, Maude; thy fingers be so soft and thy touch so gentle, that I scarcely felt the pain of removing the little stones."

When relieved, Lancelot looked around the room, saying:

"What bringeth thee here daily, Maude? Thou seemest strangely unlike the young demoiselles below."

The sister smiled, as she replied:

"Thou knowest not, brother mine, what blessed company meeteth me in this lonely turret."

"Doth our mother, the Lady Jaqueline, know aught of such secret company, Maude," said her brother, seriously. "Methinketh it becometh not a young démoiselle to hide aught from our good mother."

"Thou knowest not, Lancelot; but I will show thee," and, opening a closet, Maude brought out her precious books.

"The Gospel of St. John!" said her brother, in great surprise. "And this?" (opening the other,) "be this truly thy work, Maude?"

"The work of many weeks, Lancelot; but blessed and holy hath been the task."

"Thou seemest a feat scribe, Maude. Why, thy work is fairer than the monk's. But where didst thou get the holy Gospel?"

"I hired it from Father Ambrose, Lancelot."

"How didst thou manage that?"

"The friar favoreth thy sister, Lancelot," said Maude,

smiling; "and the promise of furmety, pottage, and good ale hath bought the priest."

"What dost thou want with the monks' book, Maude?"

"The monks' book, Lancelot! How cometh it to be theirs? The sun shineth for all, brother mine; the flowers bloom for all. Thinkest thou that the Father's book cometh down only for the monks?"

"Thou knowest it not, Maude; thou hast not the learning of Holy Church. Leave the book where she hath put it."

"Thou wottest not, Lancelot, the riches hidden in the blessed book, or thou sayest not such foolish words."

"What hast thou learned, Maude?"

"I wot, Lancelot, that we need not human learning to read that book; for the Spirit be promised to all who seek it. And I wot too that there be but one way to the heavenly city, and the Gospel telleth that it be a straight and narrow way; for there be but one Saviour, the Lord Jesus, and not a great multitude, as the friar teacheth us. It is a short way, when the eye seeth Jesus only. The Spirit leadeth us all the way; the angels watch us, and that be the company that meeteth me in the lonely turret."

"Truly thou talkest riddles, Maude!"

"Would that thou knewest, brother mine, something of the peace that even the little glimpse that visiteth me here hath brought to thy sister Maudė."

"Thou hast wrought a wondrous work, Maude, in copying out all this Gospel."

"It hath been a blessed work, and to-morrow I write another."

"What needest thou with so many, Maude?"

"The good tidings must not be shut up in my own bosom, Lancelot; for I read that when Andrew findeth the Lord, he seeketh to bring his brother to Jesus; and thou art mine, Lancelot. I know not yet who shall own these copies; but I will not be idle, and the Lord showeth me where to bestow them."

"It seemeth strange, Maude, that thou shouldst be so different from the demoiselles below, who delight only in light and airy things."

Lancelot pressed a brother's kiss upon the cheek of his fair sister, as he turned to leave the room.

"Thou art a blessed sister, Maude. I hear Father Ambrose talk of the long list of saints who guard us on our way; but thou art mine, fair sister."

Maude led her brother to the open casement.

"Seest how the flood of sunlight shineth all over Ravenscliff, Lancelot? but it passeth not by the home of Hengist the Saxon, nor the hut of poor Elswitha. See how it lighteth up the clump of trees on the right: there dwell some of the rudest and poorest of the Saxon hinds, but the sun passeth none by; and so methinketh is the way of our Father with his own book. But stop awhile longer, Lancelot: wouldest like to hear one of our sweet hymns?"

Maude brought out her cithern, and sang with deep pathos the "dulcis memoria" of St. Bernard:

"Jesu! the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

"Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find,
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind!

"O Hope of every contrite heart!
O Joy of all the meek!
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

"But what to those who find? Ah! this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know.

"Jesu! our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize shalt be;
Jesu! be Thou our glory now
And through eternity."

Lancelot listened to the sweet voice singing this sacred hymn with such heart-felt tenderness, and perceived that something lay hidden in that young heart of which he knew nothing.

"That hymn seemeth addressed to a friend, beloved Maude; and the Lord Jesus seemeth to me only the Saviour crowned with thorns on the crucifix in the chapel, but very far away from sinful mortals."

"The Gospel teacheth me that he is not much offended, an' we draw anigh enough to touch the very hem of his garment, brother."

Lancelot had much food for thought after this visit to his sister's turret.

There had been another listener in the corridor, for, with arms folded and head bowed down, Wilfred had stood near the door, drinking in the melody of the lovely voice.

"A bird to sing in Guy de Mowbray's bower," sighed the page; "Heaven bless them both!"

As the light of the pure gospel dawned upon Maude, most singular changes took place in her worship in the chapel, which was still to her the church of God upon earth. She knew naught of Protestantism nor the Reformation, for they were things unknown as yet in those dark ages; but the matin hour and the time of even-song brought her into sweet communion with her Saviour, even in this Romish chapel of mediæval days, for there she took with her the simple truths learned in the turret from Bede's pure Gospel.

The mass was now, unconsciously to her, the memorial of the last Supper; the music wafted her spirit to heaven; and even the hour of confession was a solemn interview with Jesus, the Great Mediator,—the words of that office, however, beginning to grate upon her ear. Contact with the pure word of God, like leaven hidden in the meal, was permeating Maude's spiritual nature, entirely unconscious that on the rich Provençal plains, in the middle of the century in which she lived, the seed which in centuries after produced the Reformation was germinating among the ancient Vaudois.

As early as 1124, Peter of Bruys, Henry, and Arnold of Brescia, carried the torches which they had lighted at the pure altar of the Piedmontese from these obscure valleys

into the Provençal territories. All of those honored names are yet preserved among the lists of the noble army of martyrs who sealed their faith with their blood. The first discovered congregation of this kind was at Orleans, in France, where were found several of the regular clergy, and a number of the most respectable citizens, holding the new faith.

A council was convened, which, after having tried in vain to reclaim the wanderers, resorted to the final argument of Rome, and burned them all at the stake. But Maude knew naught of those ancient martyrs, much less that in essential points her own simple faith was gradually approaching theirs, for in all ages this is the road by which we reach the Urbs Beata.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TROUBADOURS.

THE winter is deepening, storms are frequent; and it is hard to keep warm in this old castle, with its high ceilings, its spacious passages, its uncarpeted floors, and uncurtained casements. The sports are all within doors, and the ladies' fingers fly more merrily over their tapestry frames than in warmer weather.

It is the twenty-second of January, and we find the gay young damsels chatting in a lively manner over the spells of St. Agnes's Eve on the night before. It was an old custom for young girls to take a row of pins, and, picking them out one by one, to stick them slowly in their sleeves, singing a pater-noster after each one, thus insuring that her dreams should present the person who was to be her life companion.

Eveline and Gertrude Ellerton are whispering together over the success of their charm.

"It is sure to bring the future lord," said the Lady Jaqueline; "for the Baron of Ravenscliff, in my dream, presented me a rose on two successive eves of the holy saint."

The lady of the castle is embroidering a rich piece of tapestry for the abbey of St. Hilary, and a rare specimen of

work it is, representing the scenes on the plains of Judea, when the heavenly host sang their Gloria in Excelsis. Many of these ancient pieces are still preserved, representing historical events.

"A guerdon for thy dreams, Maude!" said her sister.

"Thou wouldst care naught to hear it, sister mine," said the young lady, with a smile; "for I dreamed only of making furmety for Father Ambrose."

"Didst not remember St. Agnes's Eve, Maude?" said Eveline.

"I must own that I passed by the holy eve without even thinking of the charm."

"Thou shouldst have stayed at the priory, Maude."

The wind is howling fiercely through the passages and around the loose casements of the keep, and there is every indication of a storm. Hail, sleet, and snow are beating in through the cracks, for there are many under the doors and along the linings of the casements; and the wind is blowing the tapestry that hangs upon the walls in quite a rough manner, the breeze that sets it in motion fanning the cheeks of the shivering occupants. The huge logs are piled upon the rude fire-dogs in the immense chimney-place, and the ladies, whose fingers are becoming benumbed, have added warm mantles to their winter attire, and have gathered around the roaring fire, where favorite dogs have settled themselves, privileged guests everywhere. The servants, too, are hovering around the kitchen fire, preparing the evening meal; great logs blazed in the fireplaces, two of which were now

in use; but in times of great feasts, all four roared and crackled, making an intense furnace heat.

Old Raoul flew about in a tunic of heavy serge, with bare arms and legs, giving orders to his under-cooks.

"Dost see that furmety, Leolf?" said the master; "I trow that it be not fit for a dog an' thou slackenest not the fire in a trice." Turning to another, who was attending to the chine of beef, he exclaimed:

"Ho there, Hugh! shift that spit, you varlet, or I'll lay this besom upon thy back, and wallop thee well. I wonder if Job had a like set of dumb hounds to deal with."

Just then the fury of the storm seemed redoubled, but above the din the warder's horn gave a loud, quick blast, answering a bugle at the drawbridge.

"Dost hear the call at the portcullis?" said Raoul. "Beshrew me! if old Robin liketh to turn out in such a night. Sancta Maria have mercy on the travellers!"

The company in the 'broiderie room are startlēd too by the long sharp call; and Sir Reginald, throwing on a cloak of heavy cloth, and a fur-lined cap, hurried out to meet the travellers.

The wind was blowing almost a hurricane through the lower passages, which, on being opened, admitted snow, and hail, and sleet, beating fiercely against the face.

"Bring lanterns quickly!" said the baron to a number of serving-men, who were by this time gathered in the passage.

By the light of the lanterns, a company of troubadours was soon revealed advancing slowly over the ballium.

They were four, in the costume of those days, carrying their instruments upon their backs, but drenched to the skin.

"Here, Aulaff! here, Leolf! take the harps from the minstrels; they be well-nigh beaten to death, I trow."

Leading them up the great staircase, the weather-beaten minstrels found themselves in the presence of the ladies of the castle.

"The Holy Virgin be praised!" said the elder. "Certes, we had no thought of finding a shelter on this dark night, for the air seemeth filled with fierce spirits, I trow."

"Lead the travellers to thy room, Lancelot," said the baron. "See that they have dry garments, and then meet us at the supper-table."

Refreshed by the hospitality of the young esquire, they joined the company at the table, strongly impressed by the change which a few hours had made in their condition.

"Whence comest thou?" said the baron, addressing the elder minstrel.

"From Palestine," was the reply; "where we have seen the foul Paynim pollute the sacred cross."

"Wert thou in the holy city at that time?" inquired the baron.

"We were among the number that joined the procession as it marched out of the city; and a woful sight it was to the blessed company of shining saints that watched over the holy city. There were many tokens of ill luck," continued the speaker; "birds of ill omen flying over the holy city

for seven days, and balls of fire shooting across the heavens at midnight, with many other strange sights and sounds."

A younger minstrel spoke:

"I shall never forget the sad procession that marched around Jerusalem the night before the remainder of the army set out to join the crusaders at Sophoris; the bells of every church in the city thundering out the summons to the procession."

"You had a weak and miserable king," said Sir Reginald, "for such days."

"That is true, forsooth! and we all felt the shame," said the elder minstrel.

Seated around the hospitable board, the weary travellers enjoyed the good cheer above the salt-cellar, Burgundy and other wines, with mead and ale, sharing the favor of the company; below the silver barrier, blackjack alone circulated.

After pledging to the health of the ladies, the elder minstrel asked permission to retire. The grace-cup was accordingly served around, and the guests, after making deep obeisance to the baron and the ladies of the household, were marshalled to their sleeping apartments by the steward and cupbearer, each attended by a torchbearer and a servant; a tray of refreshments and the midnight-bowl being left in the rooms of those of noble birth.

The storm still raged without, but the travellers in their little rooms experienced all the comfort of a speedy and unexpected transition from a pelting storm in deep darkness to security and repose: reciting seven pater-nosters, the troubadours were soon asleep.

The next day we find them in the 'broiderie room, enter-

taining the ladies with their music,—two harps and two lutes, with their rich voices making charming melody. As was the custom, they sang a ballad of those stirring days, relating what had just transpired under their own eyes, calling it

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

A lay, a lay, good pilgrims,
Which shall stir the sluggish blood,
While I sing in solemn cadence
Of the judgment of our God.

There was a noble castle
Near the ancient town of Lewes,
Looking down in stately grandeur
On the valley of the Ouse.

There lived in Norman greatness,
With daughter fair and bright,
Sir Julian de Warrenn,
A good and noble knight.

The lovely Lady Edith,
Betrothed true was she
To a brave and gallant noble,
Rainald de Hellingley.

A cousin, mean and craven,—
Sir William was his name,—
Bent on his rival's murder,
To slay the bridegroom came.

Another joined the traitor,
The bloody deed to aid,—
Sir Roger de Chatillon,
Half eager, half afraid.

But their malice was defeated;
And the knight, though long delayed,
Wedded the Lady Edith;
And the two were happy made.

Saved by the hand of Heaven,
The knight had made a vow
To take the cross for two whole years:
What saith the lady now?

"Where'er thou goest, my husband,
I suffer all with thee;
Now Heaven forbid that aught but death
Should sever thee and me."

* * * * * * *

They are with the bold crusaders;
Their foes are with them, too;
Sir William and Sir Roger,
To their sworn vengeance true.

With lies and wicked perjury,
They scanned the marriage laws;
And by their diabolic acts
Made theirs the better cause.

A holy bishop was entrapped,
To aid their dark design;
A sentence of divorce thus passed,
She to a cell consigned.

* * * * * * *

Sir Rainald's solemn protest
The deep felt silence broke;
And then with eyes upturned to Heaven,
The Lady Edith spoke.

"My husband hath appealed to Rome,
But I appeal to Heaven,
Where I summon you, lord bishop;
And may you be forgiven.

"I summon you in sixty days
The righteous judge to meet;
And you, Sir William Montacute,"
(Who rose upon his feet;)

"And you, Sir Roger, hear your doom:
In sixty hours, both stand
To answer for this wickedness
Wrought by your evil hand."

The Lady Edith to her cell
In the convent of St. Ann's;
And the sixty hours travelled on,
Counted by Time's swift hands.

The sixty hours travelled on:
Naught but dishonored name
Is left; for they are summoned hence,
So swift the judgment came.

The holy bishop's in the field,
Where the great cause is lost;
Defending bravely to the last
The consecrated cross.

"The holy cross is trembling!"
Shouted Sir Rainald now:
"To the rescue!" while the sweat-drops
Stood on his noble brow.

287690

"St. George and merry England!
One charge for God's dear love!"
And the knights closed round the bishop,
As he held the cross above.

"The cross's weight in silver,
For the man that seizes first!"
From the lips of the proud Paynim
In thundering accents burst.

Now, foot to foot and breast to breast,
The bishop and his foe
Struggled together for the cross,
While others struck the blow.

Beat down at last, full twenty hands
Seized on the holy cross,
And twenty more despatched the soul
Crushed by the direful loss.

The sixty days had rolled around;
The road of doom was trod:
The three before the court of Heaven
Had answered to their God.

The bishop had confessed the wrong;
The lady had forgiven,
And thought of him as one at rest
With the redeemed in heaven.

But the bitter shame and anguish
Of the memory of that day,
When the cross by Paynim monsters
In shouts was borne away,

Will never be forgotten,
Can never be effaced,

Until the sacred symbol
Stands in the Holy Place.

Then, arise! arise! good pilgrims!
Gird on your armor bright:
Up! up! ye Christian legions!
Up! up! each valiant knight!

Down with the hated crescent!
Up with the sacred cross!
For this, we'll gladly suffer
All grief, and shame, and loss.

Maude listened to the ballad with a full heart; for well she knew that the call of the troubadours was rousing the spirit of chivalry in that old castle.

Very sweet and solemn were the hours spent now in the turret with her blessed book; for she is learning daily its pure and holy lessons.

Guy de Mowbray has traced her footsteps to her quiet retreat, and we find him alone with the young student on one of these occasions.

"What keepeth thee, Maude, so much apart?" said the young man.

"I will shew thee, Guy," said the earnest reader of the book. "Dost see this blessed Gospel, Guy? Dost wonder that I should seek these quiet hours?"

"Sayest thou that this is truly the Gospel of our Lord, Maude?"

"Written by the holy St. John himself, Guy, and changed into our own tongue by the venerable Bede, a holy monk

that liveth at Durham more than four hundred years agone."

"Thou art troubling thyself about what be too hard for thee, I trow."

"It is not hard, Guy, for one that hath the key."

"What meanest thou, Maude?"

"The key of faith, Guy. I wish that it were thine."

"What learnest thou, Maude, from the book?"

"Much that I knew not before, when I thought that pater-nosters, and prayers to the Virgin and to the holy saints, were taught in the Gospel."

"What knowest thou better, Maude?"

"I learn that God is a spirit, and that we must worship him in spirit and in truth."

"Thinkest thou that Holy Church teacheth us wrong, Maude?"

"I trow not, Guy; but an' the Gospel is the real word, there seemeth naught there about such like things as we worship in Holy Church. We learn much about forms and fasts and penances in our breviary, but little about Jesus. Just let me read the words of our dear Lord himself: 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life:' so it seemeth, Guy, that his words give us life, and not the fasts and penances and sacraments of the Holy Church."

"Thou thinkest deeply, Maude, for one so young, and seemest getting astray from the teaching of our holy mother. For myself, I be content that Father Jerome should point

the way to paradise. Thou seemest to talk as though the Lord Jesus were thine own friend, Maude."

"And so the Gospel teacheth. For see how close he came to Lazarus and Mary and Martha; how he sat at their table, and slept in their house, Guy, and how they talked with him face to face. And when Lazarus died, they knew just who would come to comfort them. And see how the Gospel telleth us that Jesus wept with them, and then raised Lazarus from the dead. He was very near and precious to those disciples, Guy; and he is just the same now; and so I trow that I may go to him up here in this lonely turret, and not be frighted; for he heareth my stammering words, and loveth me, Guy, loveth Maude de Vere; for did he not die for me upon that hill of Calvary?"

"Thou talkest strangely, Maude; but it seemeth all real. And I trow that thou art one of the blessed saints that Holy Church putteth in her calendar when thou diest."

"Say not so, Guy; for I am only a sinner saved by Jesus. But what thinkest thou, Guy, of the call of the troubadours?"

"It seemeth that ere long all Christendom will be on the march for Palestine; and I tarry not."

"Wouldst like to be a soldier of the cross, Guy?"

"It seemeth a noble calling, Maude. What thinkest thou, young demoiselle?"

"Go where the Master calleth thee, Guy. It hath ever been thought a holy work, and I would not stay thy footsteps. Many a young maiden hath taken the cross in former days. Perchance Maude may be one who followeth the crusaders."

"Wouldst be a pilgrim, Maude?" said the youth.

"An' it is truly the will of our Lord, Guy, I follow the march to Palestine. I would venture much to see the holy place where the infant Saviour lay, and to set foot upon the sacred hill where our dear Lord hung upon the cross; to stand upon the mountain where he bade farewell to the holy apostles, and to kneel at the holy sepulchre where his blessed body lay. Sometimes, Guy, I dream about the holy city, and see the bright sun shining down upon the mosque of Omar; and once I dreamed that a large gilt cross glittered in the sunshine where the crescent had stood. The joy awoke me, Guy, to feel that it was but a dream."

"There will be a third crusade ere long, Maude, for the world is waking up; and the troubadours are on their way from castle to castle throughout England, France, and Germany, rousing up the knights."

"We have no Peter the Hermit, nor holy Saint Bernard now," said Maude, "to stir the people to deeds of holy warfare."

"That is true; but these troubadours have wondrous power, and their music soundeth like a trumpet-call in the ears of the faithful."

"Shouldst thou fall, Guy," (and the dark eyes filled with tears,) "it would be in a holy cause; and I should hope to meet thee at the gates of the heavenly city."

## CHAPTER IX.

### CRUSADERS AT THE CASTLE.

ASSEMBLED around the table, the company were startled by the loud and long sound of the warder's horn in answer to a bugle's call.

"Methinketh that there be some stir at the drawbridge," said the baron; "certes, that is a crusader's bugle," and hastening from the table, followed by Lancelot and Guy de Mowbray, he went forward to meet his guests.

"A company of crusaders from the holy land," said the baron, as he returned to the hall. "Let us bid them welcome in the name of the Lord."

The company assembled, with the damsels, esquires, and pages, followed by the occupants of the lower table at the end of the hall, hastened out to greet the strange visitors.

Just passing the inner ballium appeared four knights, arrayed in armor which glittered in the sunshine, one carrying a tattered banner, followed by a few men-at-arms, all wearing the red cross. At an humble distance marched a holy palmer, known by the weeds of a pilgrim. A cloak of black serge enveloped his whole body, in shape something like the cloak of a modern hussar, having flaps for covering the arms; coarse sandals bound with thongs on

his bare feet; a broad and shadowy hat, with cockle-shells stitched on its brim; and a long staff shod with iron, to the upper end of which was attached a branch of palm, withered, it is true, but still sacred in the eyes of pilgrims as having been plucked from the trees of Palestine.

Father Ambrose, bearing aloft a cross, advanced, as they halted at the entrance.

"All hail! soldiers of the holy cross!" said the priest. "Blessed be ye in the name of the Lord! What tidings bring ye from Palestine?"

"Jerusalem hath fallen. The holy city is trodden under the foot of the Moslem," said Sir Bryan de Bourg, the eldest of the knights.

"We have heard the evil tidings, and all Christendom sitteth in dust and ashes!" replied the priest.

Chanting the *miserere*, the procession entered the castle of Ravenscliff, the banner of the crusaders trailing in the dust.

Laying aside some of their heavy armor, a group of weather-beaten, sad, and worn-out pilgrims seated themselves at the board spread in the banqueting-hall.

There were three besides Sir Bryan: Sir Amelot de Russy, Sir Reginald d'Evreux, and Sir Hugh de Courcy, — four as brave and gallant knights as ever assumed the cross.

After the refreshment of the crusaders, the family awaited anxiously to hear farther tidings.

"Naught but disaster hath followed our arms," said Sir Bryan; "albeit that our soldiers fought like brave men long and well."

"All England hath been aroused by the terrible news," said the baron. "After holding the holy city eighty-eight years, its downfall hath filled all Christendom with grief. But what news syth?"

"Naught but rout and defeat to the crusaders," was the reply.

The inhabitants of the castle now crowded around the strangers with breathless interest, none more deeply stirred than the Lady Maude. Sir Bryan de Bourg had a long account to give of the humiliation following their defeat; of the generosity shown by Saladin in some cases, and his cruelty in other instances; but when he told how two hundred and thirty of the religious orders, rather than apostatize, submitted to a cruel death, the baron struck his clenched fist upon the table, and the young esquires and pages rose to their feet, crying out:

"Their massacre calleth for vengeance. It is the will of God!"

Maude's dark eyes flashed with unusual fire, Eveline's were suffused with tears, and Blanche de Lacey's cheek became still paler, while listening to the recital, clasping the hand of the Lady Jaqueline; but with one accord the women's voices joined in the cry of the young soldiers: "It is the will of God."

"But there is one picture of shame which makes Christian blood boil with rage," continued Sir Bryan. "It wringeth my heart even now to tell the story, — the great mosque of St. Omar, which had been turned into a Christian church, was consecrated anew to the worship of Islam,

its pavements and walls washed with Damascus rose-water. But listen, soldiers, while you swear to be avenged! The golden cross which surmounted the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was taken down, and for two days dragged through the streets; Saladin, at the head of a triumphant procession, glorying in the desecration; and thus our holy places were polluted by the infidels!"

It would be a difficult task to attempt a description of the indignation that filled every heart that listened to this degrading recital; but down in the depths of each there were solemn vows that only waited time and circumstances for fulfilment.

"Bring hither the holy cross, Father Ambrose," said the baron; and, kissing it solemnly, he continued: "By this I vow to take the cross, and to join the first army that marcheth to Palestine. Who followeth in the train?"

One by one, esquires and pages solemnly followed the example of the baron and then advanced the knights, who vowed never to sheathe the sword until their holy work was done.

Maude's heart was deeply stirred, and we find her more frequently in the chapel, at all hours, devoutly sending up prayers to heaven for the success of the crusaders. The Baron of Ravenscliff, with princely generosity, provided the knights with what they needed, prevailing upon them to tarry at the castle a few days to recruit their wasted strength ere they sought their homes.

The day for the birthday banquet dawns brightly, and the young demoiselles are in the hands of their bower-women,

each resolved that her lady shall be the loveliest. Fresh rushes are spread in the banqueting-hall, and rosemary and flowers are disposed around in abundance, while over the upper dais is spread the banner of England, and on which is spread a piece of carpet. Here we find the family of the baron, the knights, the ladies, and the priest; next in rank come the troubadours, esquires, and pages, and at the lower table, the servants of the household. The ladies, in their superb dresses, with their sweeping trains and glittering jewels, presented an appearance of exceeding loveliness, as they entered the hall, greeted by inspiring music; the knights, esquires, and pages rising, and standing until the fair procession was seated.

But the Prioress of St. Agnes must be noticed here; for in these palmy days heads of convents were found at all manner of festivities. We could scarcely have recognized the richly-dressed lady as the head of an establishment whose vow renounces the gayeties of the world. She wore, indeed, the costume of her order, with regard to color and shape; but her robe, instead of coarse serge, was of black velvet; her frontlet and barb elaborately embroidered; her long gloves of white Spanish leather, delicately perfumed, and wrought with needle-work of colored silks; her fingers were loaded with rings; and from her girdle, set with the finest gems, were suspended a pomander of gold and enamel, a silver seal, and a rosary of amethyst beads, holding a crucifix made of alabaster and gold. This description may perhaps be deemed overwrought, but it is copied from an ancient book, which gives an account of the

extravagance of prioresses in mediæval days. Maude sometimes wondered, when she looked at her stately aunt, what her vow of renunciation meant. But she is here at the birthday banquet, among the troubadours and knights, one of the most exalted and engrossed of that array of noble ladies.

There were many dishes unknown to us of modern days,—almost every green thing that grew in the garden was eaten, rose-leaves not excepted; salt was despised, sugar very expensive, and honey used instead; pepper, and cloves, and mustard used in large quantities, and wine flowed abundantly; but it is quite beyond the power of a modern pen to describe the various little dishes that graced the table.

It was a cheerful banquet, and the returned knights, with anecdotes of foreign manners and customs, did much to enliven the occasion.

At the close of the feast, Sir Bryan courteously proposed a toast to the young demoiselles of the castle, which was drunk, all standing.

"We pledge our devoirs to the Ladies Maudé and Eveline de Vere," said the knight, "twin queens of love and beauty."

After the tables were cleared, the minstrel of the castle entertained the company with some Provençal music; and at the last, the baron whispered a word to Maude, who, seating herself at the harp, held the whole company enchained by her own inspiring air, which had so delighted her father. After the singing of several verses, the whole company, catching the inspiration, joined in the chorus, standing:

"Our Lady calls. To arms! to arms!"

The great hall resounded with the ringing calls, — the crusaders, with their right hands raised to heaven, and their eyes turned upward, while the baron waved the flag of England; and, at the close, all joined in the crusaders' cry:

"Down with the Moslem! It is the will of God! St. George for merry England!"

When Sir Bryan de Bourg heard that the Lady Maude was the author of the air, he bowed over her hand with knightly reverence, saying:

"Thou shouldst be canonized, fair lady, as one of our tutelar saints; for, by St. George! no troubadour hath equalled thy lay, I trow."

Then followed a stirring call by the troubadours; for, travelling from castle to castle, it was their thrilling poetry that roused the spirit of the third crusade. The first had been the effect of a general enthusiasm, the second of individual eloquence, but the third of poetry, — the first being brought about by the clergy alone; but this was the work of the troubadours.

The rich, manly voices of the minstrels, accompanied by their harps, gave a power of expression to the call that follows:

Wake, drowsy knight, the trumpet calls!
It calls thee once, it calls thee thrice;
An' that thou doze thy life away,
Thou ne'er canst reach sweet paradise.

Up, craven knight! Away! away!
Hear'st thou the call repeated thrice?
An' that thou hidest from the strife,
Thou ne'er wilt enter paradise.

Up, men-at-arms! The world awakes.
Doth not the trumpet-call suffice?
Follow the crowd that marcheth on
The path that leads to paradise.

The trumpet calls. The banners point
To sacred Palestine's bright skies;
Raise high the cross, and follow on
The crowds that march to paradise.

Fair lady, bind the helmet on,
And bid thy lover quick arise;
Go bid him take the battle-axe,
To cleave his path to paradise.

Forsake the world; bind on the cross;
Join the crusader's battle-cries:
"For merry England and St. George!"
With this march on to paradise.

List to the shout that fills the air!
"It is the will of God!" he cries;
With this the soldier of the cross
Enters the gates of paradise.

A day or two longer brought the stay of the crusaders to an end, and we find them about to take their departure.

"Canst count upon thine aid?" said Sir Bryan to the baron, "shouldst another army march to Palestine?"

"Truly as the sun shineth in the heavens," was the reply; "and England's king already chafeth under the defeats of the crusaders. When King Richard marcheth, the Lord of Ravenscliff followeth."

Heading the procession that left the castle, the friar bore the cross aloft; the whole retinue following, chanting the *miserere.*

After the departure of the crusaders, we find Maude and Guy walking with slow and measured steps along the shaded walk in the pleasance.

"The happy, quiet days draw to an end, Guy," said the young demoiselle; "for no true Christian tarrieth at home while the holy land continueth in the hands of infidels."

"It seemeth so, Maude; for when England stirreth herself in earnest, there lacketh not thousands of brave hearts to spring to arms. Thine own song calleth us, Maude."

"Methinketh, Guy, that there soundeth not a summons to loftier deeds than calleth all true knights to Palestine. I could gird on thy sword with mine own hands, and bid thee strike for the redemption of the holy sepulchre."

Guy drew nearer to the young enthusiast, and whispered in low tones:

"Soon I leave thee, sweet one, and return to Hawksworth; but in these uncertain times I go not without the dear assurance of thy love. Not a sister's, Maude; I seek a dearer, holier tie. Dost love me, Maude? Wouldst join thy lot with mine? in the bright sunshine or in the days of darkness and sorrow?"

Maude raised her pure saintly face to Guy's, and, placing her hand within his own, answered, in a voice tremulous with deep feeling:

"Thine own, Guy. I have always loved thee with a pure and holy affection, and now, before Heaven, I give thee my

plighted troth, to love thee with my whole heart. But still I bid thee go on the holy errand that stirreth up all Christendom; and may the Master that we love defend thee, Guy, and bring thee back to thy native land and to me."

"And then, Maude, when our holy work is done, I come to claim thee, sweet one, for mine own; and thou wilt be my tutelar saint, I trow."

Maude's countenance fell, as she replied sadly:

"We know not, Guy, what lieth in our future path; for thy father, the Baron of Hawksworth, welcometh none of the hated race of De Vere to his castle."

"We hope for a better end of our betrothal, sweet one; an' thou be true to thy plighted troth, Maude, I fear naught else."

"Thou hast my word, Guy; and thou mayest be sure that naught but death parteth thee and me. But still I bid thee go, beloved; go to redeem the holy places from the pollution of infidels; and when the rising sun calleth us to matins, and his departing beams cast their shadows upon the hour of even-song, thou mayest know that Maude prayeth for thee in the chapel of Ravenscliff or in the quiet turret."

There was a look of lofty feeling in the fair face, but tears in the dark eyes, as the young maiden uttered those tender, yet heroic words; and passing his arm around the Lady Maude, Guy replied, in a voice full of feeling, "Heaven bless thee, Maude, forever and aye!"

Maude had no concealments from the Lady Jaqueline, therefore we find her seeking her after this interview with

Guy. She told her simple story; and the mother, smiling, replied:

"It scarcely seemeth like unto surprising news, Maude, for thy father and I have looked for it to come to this syth the days of childhood; and thou couldst not have chosen a braver hand, or a nobler, warmer heart to guide thee, daughter mine, I trow, than beateth in the bosom of Guy de Mowbray."

With these words, the mother pressed a kiss upon the cheek of the young maiden.

Guy likewise sought the baron, who gave his hearty approval, but with the caution:

"This be a union long delayed, Guy, an' thou tarriest for thy father's sanction."

The pleasant season is at an end, for the De Mowbrays had stayed far beyond the time allotted, and now they must part. Brave as Maude had been in the expression of heroic sentiments, her woman's heart sank within her as she caught the last glimpse of the plume waving in the cap of Guy de Mowbray passing out of the gate that led to the drawbridge, and in the quiet of her little turret we find her committing the three, from whom she had just parted, to the care of her newly found Saviour.

## CHAPTER X.

### MAUDE IN THE DAY DAWN.

MAUDE is still a faithful visitor to her little turret; and now the spring is dawning, for it is the bright month of April in merry Angoland.

It is an inspiring picture which Maude studies, leaning thoughtfully on the sill of her open casement; for she has from this height a commanding view of the country for miles around, as well as the pleasance within the ballium around the castle.

In the green fields beyond the castle, the children of the peasants are rushing about in their giddy joy, chasing each other like gay butterflies; some lying on their backs tossing up the sweet clover over their heads; and some more quiet, seated under the shade of branching trees, are making wreaths of daisies; and infant toddlers are filling their homely aprons with flowers,—a charming picture, exhibiting the unstudied grace of childhood. An old man is pacing slowly along on the shady side of the field: he is leaning on his cane, but stops now and then to look at the sports of the light-hearted children. It is with a sad and tender smile that he watches the merry groups, for the old man is thinking of the pale faces beneath the green sod that were once as merry as these.

Cuckoo! cuckoo! ah! well he knows that note, and taking off his hat, that hinders his vision, he looks up among the green foliage, as he did when a boy, for the welcome harbinger of spring; but his eyes are dim and misty now, and he sees not the bird. He hears the song of other familiar birds, and he thinks of those who listened to the same song in the spring-time of by-gone days, and link by link he is unwinding the chain which reaches from the grave to heaven: he is seated now under the old oak, leaning on his cane, wiping now and then a large tear that steals over his withered face; rising slowly, he takes the hand of his chubby-cheeked grandchild, who is always ready to leave her sports for grandfather's bidding.

The trees are clad now in the fresh tints of the spring foliage, and one of the most beautiful trees now in blossom is the almond-tree, which stands in the pleasance covered with a bloom of lovely pink, that, at this distance, looks like one great flower. The bright blue of an April sky is so charming too, for if occasionally a slight veil of a gentle shower dims its beauty, it is only to shine again like a gay coquette through most of the spring days.

Crowds of birds have returned now to their nests, some in the hollows of old woods among the bushes that dot the heaths, and some amid the hawthorn bloom; for there builds the pretty May-bird. The whole land is musical, the woods like one great cathedral of praise.

There is an old wall-flower just outside of Maude's casement, and here a red stork has built her nest for several

succeeding seasons. Perched sometimes on the sill of the turret, the mate continues his song from early morn, shaking his tail all the time with a tremulous motion, while the female is sitting anxiously upon her nest.

The sweet spring flowers are everywhere, cowslips and daisies by the roadside, blue-bells and lilies of the valley, and sweet violets on the shady hills, yielding their sweet perfume to passers-by; and this is the picture seen from the casement of the lonely turret, this the sweet face of nature: but Maude has a deeper study in the volume on the little table. She is reading to-day some of our Lord's most remarkable words:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Maude read on six or seven verses farther, bewildered by the early teaching of the Romish Church; for, from the dawn of reason, she had been accustomed to worship the host in the sacrifice of the Mass; but a mind even partially enlightened by the Spirit of God could not embrace the doctrine with intelligent faith.

Maude remembered that Jesus said elsewhere, "I am the door," and again, "I am the vine;" and turning to the passage in the same chapter, she read again the blessed words which had so often relieved her perplexities.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." "Truly this is the bread of life, dear Saviour; on thee feed I in my heart by a living faith," whispered Maude, in her retirement.

There is a knock at the turret-door, and good old Cicely stands there with a tray of refreshments; for Maude has been longer than usual absent from the Lady Jaqueline.

"What keepeth thee apart from the young demoiselles, Lady Maude?" said the old servant; "they are in the 'broiderie room, and the gay troubadours sing brave songs for them while thou tarriest here in this old turret."

"Wouldst like to know my company, Cicely?" said the young maiden, as she pointed to the book lying on her table. "This be the blessed Gospel of St. John, Cicely; and I be writing the third copy. I wish that thou mightest read the holy book."

"Be this thy wonderful work, Lady Maude? Why writest thou three?"

"It seemeth such a gift, Cicely, that I would that all might read the good news."

"The priest telleth all that we need, I trow; and the Blessed Virgin leadeth us straight to paradise an' we say our pater-nosters and obey Holy Church."

Cicely turned to leave the room, and was soon followed by the Prioress of St. Agnes, now on a visit to Ravenscliff.

"Strange tidings I hear, Maude, about thy work here in this lonely room. What doest thou with the holy Gospel, child?"

"Father Ambrose lendeth me his copy; and I have learned

every word of it, holy mother, and can show thee nearly three copies written by mine own hand."

"That is not the work for a young demoiselle: hie thee to Father Ambrose; he hath learning enough to lead souls home to paradise. The Holy Church willeth not that her children know the Gospel for themselves."

"But, holy mother, I have learned blessed lessons up here, away from the noise below; for Jesus our Lord hath come nigh to open mine eyes."

"What learnest thou, Maude?"

"That we eat not our Lord's body in the service of the Mass, for he declareth himself that his *words* are spirit, and they are life."

"This be heresy, Maude," said the prioress, with a dark frown; "just such like as sixty-four years ago broke out among a pestilential set at Orleans, in France; and the Holy Church, to protect herself from the poison, had to rid the world of such heretics."

Maude looked her horror, for she had never heard of the old Vaudois.

"Can it be that the Church of our dear Lord could put any one to death for reading his blessed Gospel? Why, the whole Gospel of St. John be naught but a letter full of the love of our dear Lord: how then cometh punishment and death from the Church that he left?"

"Passing ages call for divers ways of ruling; and when enemies to the true faith appear, it becometh the duty of the Church to cut off such offenders."

A lump of lead sank down into the heart of Maude de Vere,

for no sophistry could blind her now to the wickedness of such deeds.

"Father Ambrose is a weak and foolish priest," continued the prioress; "he hath only disturbed thy faith, Maude, by his indulgence. Thou hadst better give up the Gospel, and go back to the good old paths of submission to Holy Church."

Maude smiled.

"That can never be, holy mother, for every word of the Gospel be hidden here, down in the depths of my heart; an' shouldst thou take away my books, thou canst never take the words out of my mind."

Maude was careful as ever in attending upon the services of the chapel, but the Lord saw that the worship of the heart was addressed no more to the Holy Virgin or the blessed saints, but to Jesus only, as the great Mediator between God and man.

The postures in the Romish service were still observed, but the reverence was paid to Jesus, and not to fallible saints, or a human mediatrix.

"Thou hast done a foolish thing, Father Ambrose," said the prioress, seeking him in the sacristy.

"What meanest thou, holy mother?" was the monk's reply.

"Thou hast furnished Maude with the Gospel in our own tongue; and here we find her questioning the doctrines of the Holy Church."

"I trow that it harmeth her not, good mother, for she is a wise and holy child of the true Church."

"She talketh like the old Vaudois, father; and thou deniest not their heresy."

"She hath never heard of such deniers of the faith. But I will talk with her; an' I find her infected, I take away the Gospel."

"Thou canst not, foolish priest, for she hath hidden every word down in her heart."

Father Ambrose has summoned the young inquirer to an audience in the sacristy.

"I sent for thee, my daughter, to ask an' it be true that thou deniest the real presence of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist?"

Maude replied, meekly:

"The book teacheth me that the words of Christ giveth spiritual life, and that maketh a great difference in the understanding of the words coming before. So I read, father, that when our Lord saith: 'I am the bread of life,' and that we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, it meaneth no more that we really eat the body in which he dwelleth when here below than that he be truly 'a door' or 'a vine.'"

"The Church teacheth not so, Maude. Dost pray to the Holy Virgin and the saints?"

"I have looked all through the book for such like prayers, but I find none; and methinketh that the Holy Mother liketh not the worship of her Son to be paid to herself: but I love the Holy Virgin and the blessed saints, father, and hope to meet them at the gates of the holy city, and to dwell in the same paradise with them, though at a great

distance from the heights of holiness which they have reached."

"Dost strive to do good works, Maude, such as frequent prayer, fasting, alms deeds, confession, and the sacrifice of the Mass?"

"I read in the book that Jesus hath done the work of our salvation, and that by faith in him only we have peace with God. I know it, holy father, — the peace of God that passeth all understanding; but then I love to pray, to fast, to confess my sins, and to give alms, because Jesus commandeth it, and not because it purchaseth an entrance into paradise."

"I fear, Maude, that thou be departing from the doctrine of Holy Church."

"It seemeth not so to me, Father Ambrose; for the holy apostles that lived near our Lord knew more of the true doctrine than any since that day; and the holy Apostle John was one that Jesus loved, and I have learned from him the Gospel."

"Wouldst give up the book, Maude?"

"There it is, father. Thou hast thine own; but I have hidden every word of it deep in my heart of hearts."

"Dost reverence the Holy Father the Pope, Maude?"

"I honor him as the head of the Holy Catholic Church, father, and pray daily for him and all the holy fathers."

"He needeth not thy prayers, Maude; for, as the vicegerent of Christ upon earth, in him are stored up all the treasures of grace."

"But, father, he is but mortal, and liable to err, as did the Apostle Peter."

"Thou utterest heresy, Maude. The Holy Father, the Pope, cannot err; for in him dwelleth the Holy Spirit, and he is the dispenser of the blessed gift."

"But the book telleth me, father, that when our Lord comforteth his disciples, he saith: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you;' and in his last prayer, he telleth to whom these words belong; 'for them also which shall believe on me through their word,' — the word of the apostles and all the holy preachers of the true gospel, down through the centuries, father, until they come to us, to humble Maude de Vere."

The priest looked upon the glowing face and the clasped hands of the youthful speaker, and, realizing how deep a hold the faith of the Vaudois had taken upon his favorite pupil, he said:

"I may have greatly erred in lending thee the book, Maude; but be careful to observe all the rules of Holy Church, for in her bosom only is salvation."

Centuries ahead of the dwellers in this mediæval castle, we find Maude in her simple faith; for contact with the word of Christ had wrought in her the same moral change as among the Vaudois in the valleys of Piedmont.

The Prioress of St. Agnes had left an invitation to a ceremony about to be celebrated at the convent, where several of the companions of the young ladies were soon to take the veil.

Accordingly, we find Wilfred in the stable, examining the

palfrey destined for the Lady Maude; for her own jennet was under the care of the farrier, and she would, therefore, be obliged to ride a strange animal.

"Art certain that the beast be safe, Hugh?" inquired the page.

"He hath never harmed his rider," was the reply; "only a trifle mettlesome, forsooth."

"Thou rememberest, Hugh, that he beareth the Lady Maude," replied the page, as he turned away.

"Thou needest not raise thine eyes so high, bold page," said the hostler, when Wilfred was fairly out of hearing; "for a crow matcheth not with a proud merlin, I trow."

The gay cavalcade started off in high spirits, and for a few miles all went gallantly along, Maude's palfrey cantering on apparently gentle as the rest; but Wilfred remembered the gleam in his eye, and kept a close watch upon his movements. Suddenly a large flock of sheep appeared in sight, driven by two men on horseback. Having reached a cross-road, the leader led the way off in that direction. The cries of the driver, the loud baaing of a large flock of frightened sheep, the galloping to and fro across the path of the cavalcade, alarmed Maude's palfrey, who began to rear and plunge violently. Wilfred was quickly at her side, encouraging her efforts to keep her seat; but in spite of all her horsemanship, the animal stood almost upright, throwing Maude backward. Wilfred, perceiving her danger, hastily threw the reins of his own horse into the hands of a man-at-arms, and springing to the ground, at the next furious plunge downward, headed the frightened animal, and suc-

ceeded in obtaining the bridle, the horse's feet, however, coming down upon his head. Prostrate on the ground, and keeping his hold upon the bridle, he called out to the maiden:

"Keep thy seat, for the Holy Virgin's sake, Lady Maude."

All was the work of a minute; for in an instant Lancelot had received the Lady Maude, as she fell, in his arms. One of the men-at-arms had dragged Wilfred from under the horse's hoofs, and two others succeeded in obtaining control of the animal.

Wilfred was severely injured, having a gash in the right cheek, and another on the side of the head, from which the blood flowed profusely. Maude was only frightened and bruised; but, in a fainting condition, both were carried to the nearest house on the roadside. Maude soon recovered sufficiently to administer to the relief of her preserver. Calling for sponge and water, we find her staunching the blood, and with her own gentle hand carefully stitching the gashes, which were deep, and, obtaining some adhesive matter, she finished her work with the skill of a surgeon.

When the operation was completed, Wilfred raised his grateful eyes to the face of the young damsel, and pressing his pale lips upon her hand, he whispered:

"It were worth the pain to have such gentle surgery as thine, fair lady."

"How can I thank thee, good Wilfred? for, at the risk of thine own, thou hast preserved my life. I shall remember the debt, good friend."

"Not as I remember thee, fair lady."

Finding that the two were not dangerously injured, the remainder of the party resumed their journey; but a litter was sent for, to conduct Maude and Wilfred back to the castle.

Fever followed in Wilfred's case, and for several days Maude was by his side, reading the Gospel and ministering to his wants. Dangerous intercourse for the page, — drinking in not only the teachings of St. John, but the sweet murmurs of a gentle woman's voice, awakening dreams never to be realized.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ROYAL VISITORS.

RAVENSCLIFF is all astir; for a messenger has just arrived from court to announce a visit from King Richard and the queen-mother.

"The king proclaimeth a tournament to be held near the castle," said the herald; "and I trow that none such hath been seen for many a year agone."

"Make my devoirs to my liege," was the baron's reply, "and bid him welcome to Ravenscliff."

"What meaneth this visit at this time," said the Lady Jaqueline, "when the whole kingdom seemeth to think of naught but the crusades?"

The baron smiled, as he replied:

"No mere sport is this grand gathering of the nobles; for I trow that thousands come to the tournament, and the king witteth that soldiers flock to the cross from such like places."

"When look we for the court?"

"In a fortnight hence; and there must be speed at Ravenscliff."

The young demoiselles were like a flock of butterflies in

their eager delight; each one already planning her costume for this great occasion: Eveline, the leader among them, and Maude also pleased with the idea of the grand spectacle.

The youth of the castle redoubled their zeal in the practice of their military sports; for, although but few of them had quite reached the age when they could enter the lists at tournaments, still there might be other occasions when they could display their accomplishments; as it was usual to allow a trial of their skill on the day before a tournament. A horseman of modern days would hang his head with shame to see these youth, completely armed, spring upon horseback without putting a foot in the stirrup, the young equestrians much stimulated by the presence of the ladies of the castle; for all was military excitement now. Leaning over the palisade which bounded the tilt-yard, they stood applauding the efforts of the riders. Some turned somersaults in heavy armor, for the purpose of strengthening their arms. Some leaped upon the shoulders of a horseman from behind, with only one hand laid upon his shoulder. It would seem, at first view, that few constitutions could undergo such violent exertions for any length of time; but one must read of the results produced; for in after-life men were found bearing a weight that few persons of the present day could lift, through the heat of a summer's day under the burning sun of Palestine. Throughout the castle was everywhere seen the stir of preparation. The state apartments were thrown open, and cleaned according to the ideas of such work in those feudal days. The heavy, oaken bedsteads were covered with a canopy of crimson, orna-

mented with gilt stars; the walls hung with tapestry; the coverlet corresponding with the canopy. By the side of each bedstead was spread a small carpet, — a piece of rare wealth, — on which, standing near the wall, was a table, holding a silver crucifix and a lamp filled with perfumed oil. A footstool, before the table, for kneeling, a few massive chairs of rude workmanship, and six silver candelabra with wax candles, completed the furniture of a sleeping apartment for royalty.

The country has been scoured all around for provision for such a retinue, and old Raoul, in the kitchen, is in a state of fever-heat as to how he shall provide for the court.

The day has arrived at length. The ladies, in their richest attire, and the young esquires, in their armor, await the coming of the royal party. Maude, from her turret, sees the cavalcade in the distance; the banner of England waving in the summer breeze, the rich dresses of the court glittering in the sunshine, and the trumpets announcing their speedy approach. The baron and his retinue, mounted, await the royal train at the drawbridge, the banners of England floating proudly from the keep and barbican, and the martial music of the castle playing national airs.

They are in sight now; the warder's horn answers the blast of the trumpets, and "Down portcullis!" calls the baron. Issuing out from the ballium, and crossing the drawbridge, the baron and his retinue, lowering their lances and fixing them in the ground, made their deep obeisance to the king.

"Welcome, Richard Plantagenet, King of England, to our

castle of Ravenscliff!" said the baron, and then making his obeisance to the queen-mother, repeated the salutation.

Heading the procession, the baron conducted the royal train over the ballium; the music playing; the walls lined with eager spectators, anxious to see the lion-hearted King of England. Mounted on a noble charger, splendidly caparisoned with a foot-cloth of cloth of gold heavily embroidered, and reaching nearly to the ground, we behold Richard Plantagenet.

He is tall and majestic, very finely formed, with blue eyes full of fire, and hair of a yellow hue, much admired in those days. He is arrayed in the dress of peace, with a dalmatic, or long tunic of crimson, starred with gold, girded by a rich belt, over which was worn a mantle, elegantly embroidered with half-moons and orbs of silver; sandals of purple cloth fretted with gold, in long bandages crossing each other equally up the leg. The boots were green, with gold spurs fastened by red leather. The gloves, reaching nearly to the elbow, were embroidered at the top, with jewels on the back of the hand. He wore a beard and mustache, and the hair, curled, hung down over his neck; the head covered by a Phrygian cap bordered with jewels, on the wrist carrying a falcon.

Thus appeared Cœur de Lion in the sight of the multitude upon the walls, who shouted, with loud voices, "Long live King Richard!"

The queen wore a rich green robe or tunic, long and flowing, with tight sleeves, encircled by a girdle, to which was suspended an almoniere, somewhat like a modern reticule.

Over the tunic she wore a robe embroidered with golden crescents. The wimple, or veil, wrapped around the head and chin, was bound upon the forehead by a jewelled fillet, having a diamond in the centre. Short boots and embroidered gloves, jewelled also, completed the costume of the queen.

Onward to the banqueting-hall the baron led the royal party, where the ladies of the castle were in waiting. Two massive chairs were placed at the head of the dais, over which was suspended a rich canopy; six heavy candelabras having been added to the banqueting-hall.

The king and queen marched with majestic step up the great hall, to the chairs of state, all standing until the royal pair were seated. Then, one by one, the ladies advanced to do homage, kneeling before the king, who looked with bold, admiring gaze upon the lovely daughters of De Vere.

Escorted to their apartments by a retinue of serving-men, headed by the steward and cupbearer, the royal party retired to rest awhile after their long journey, and in their private apartments were bountifully served with refreshments.

The banquet, meanwhile, was in a state of preparation; old Raoul driving his serving-men with no very gentle words. The table occupied by the royal party and the family of the baron, covered with scarlet cloth, was stretched across the dais, and those for the lower orders, standing lengthwise, formed a letter T. When all was ready, the trumpets announced the fact, and, headed by twelve torch-

bearers, the royal party entered the hall, and took their seats amid strains of martial music. The ceremony of bringing in the peacock, served in the most showy style, was performed by the Lady Eveline, followed by the ladies of the castle.

"Thou boastest queens of beauty in thine old castle, De Vere," said the king, gazing rather freely at the sisters.

"Very diverse in their characters, my liege; one of earth, the other of heaven."

"Dost think that we have chosen a fair spot for our sports, De Vere?"

"We have as fine a slope as can be found throughout the kingdom, my liege. But is that all that draweth thee away from London?"

"Believe it not, De Vere. Taking the cross ourself, from the crowds coming here we gain many soldiers. Perchance there be some among the noble youth at the castle ready for knighthood."

"Certes! that be so, my liege; and many haste to the lists when the royal hand bestoweth the honor."

Lancelot de Vere, Guy de Mowbray, Walter Davenant, and several others, have passed through all the preliminaries. Long vigils, fasts, penances, prayers, and confession preceded the ceremony, and, consequently, we find the young esquires in the chapel nightly, keeping their midnight vigils. Guy de Mowbray has heard of the opportunity, and has eagerly joined the aspirants. Perhaps none of those young esquires were more promising; for, possessed of every knightly virtue, he was truly prepared to take the vows of chivalry.

On the day appointed, the Bishop of Durham, with all the knights and nobles of the castle, — the prelate in the vestments of his order, the knights in their armor, — conducted the young aspirants to the Abbey of St. Hilary.

The ladies of the castle, and others, crowded to witness the ceremonies, especial seats being appointed for the court; the king acting as godfather to the young novices.

After high Mass had been celebrated, the novices approached the altar and presented their swords to the bishop, who blessed and consecrated them to the service of religion and virtue. The occasion was one of more than usual interest; the number of the aspirants, the military zeal of the age, the presence of the king, the magnificence of the preparations, all gave dignity to the ceremony. We find, therefore, the Bishop of Durham warning the youth of the difficulties which they would encounter in fulfiling the vows of the order.

"He who seeks to be a knight," said the bishop, "should have great qualities. He must be of noble birth, liberal in gifts, high in courage, strong in danger, secret in council, patient in difficulty, powerful against enemies, prudent in his deeds. He must also swear to observe the following rules: To undertake nothing without having heard Mass and fasting, to spare neither his blood nor his life in defence of the Holy Catholic faith, to give aid to all widows and orphans, to undertake no war without just cause, to favor no injustice; but to protect the innocent and oppressed, to be humble in all things, to seek the welfare of those

placed under him, never to violate the law of his sovereign, and to live irreproachably before God and man."

Guy de Mowbray, in the dress of an esquire, approached first; the bishop, then taking his joined hands in his own, placed them on the missal, and received his oath; this portion of the ceremony being followed successively by each of the others. Then the novices carried the sword, which had been blessed, to the king, and, kneeling before him, they plighted their solemn vows.

After this, the knights advanced to receive their armor; Lancelot and Guy, having selected Maude and Eveline, — as ladies often performed that office; Maude arming Guy, and Eveline her brother Lancelot; the corslet and the greaves buckled on first, the spear and sword last. Completely armed, the novices still remained kneeling before the king, who, rising from his seat, bestowed upon each the accolade, which consisted generally of three blows of the naked sword upon the neck or shoulder, the king pronouncing, in a loud, clear voice: "In the name of God and St. George, I make thee knight. Be loyal, bold, and true;" adding also: "Bear this blow, and never bear another."

After receiving the blow, which ended the servitude as esquire, the new knights were decorated with their casques, which had hitherto been held beside them; and then marching down the aisle of the church, amid a flourish of trumpets, at the door of the abbey they sprang upon their horses, showing themselves completely armed in the presence of the spectators, while the heralds proclaimed their names and vaunted of their prowess.

In the after-part of the day, a tilting match was held in the castle-yard, witnessed by the king, queen, and ladies of the castle; Guy and Lancelot, by the mutual exchange of arms, having solemnly adopted each other as brothers in arms. Both were equally celebrated for strength and skilful horsemanship, and when it became known that the two would engage each other, great excitement was produced among the gay company.

The weapons blunted and otherwise restrained, the contest was simply one of skill; but it is probable that a modern lady would have fainted at the sight of the fierce onset, the flashing lances, parried with inimitable skill by the two, and the tremendous power by which the first shock was sustained without unhorsing either; then, retreating with the same wonderful swiftness, a second onset was made, more fierce than the first, the noise of clashing armor mingling with the cries of the spectators: "Honor to the brave! The love of ladies! Death to the horses!"

At the second onset, a swift and skilful blow of the lance, struck by Guy upon Lancelot's casque, made him reel in his saddle, his horse, at the same time rearing, upon his hind feet, and before the rider could recover himself, covered with dust, the dismounted knight rolled upon the ground, and Guy was victor of the day.

Stooping over the fallen knight, Guy assisted him to his feet; but there was no injury, save a slight bruise from the casque in falling. Carrying still farther the mock fight, Guy, claiming the privilege of the day, advanced to Maude, declaring her as the Queen of Love and Beauty; then, with

a grace all her own, she extended the prize of a bracelet, which was received with the usual knightly privilege.

"A brave and gallant knight!" said the king to the Baron of Ravenscliff. "One can scarcely choose atween the two, the vanquished or the victor. We trow that both perform good service in the holy war."

Large numbers assembled at the close of that day in the chapel at vespers; for religious enthusiasm was strangely stimulated by the ceremonies of the morning. Guy prayed with renewed devotion to the blessed Virgin, and Maude with deeper earnestness to her newly found Mediator. After the service, we find the two alone in the rude retreat in the pleasance.

"Stirring days be upon us, Grey," said his companion; "for all the day I have seen thee on the battle-fields of Palestine; for there thou wilt be ere many suns rise upon the Holy Land."

"It is a glorious cause, Maude, that calleth every brave knight away; and thou hinderest not, I trow, by thy soft words?"

"When I girded on thine armor, Guy, I prayed that thou mightest be a true and loyal knight; and though it wringeth the heart to say farewell, I could speak the words for the sake of our dear Lord."

"Thou art one of the sainted ones, Maude, and I trow that thy dear prayer entereth the ear of the Holy Virgin."

"Rather would I reach the ear of our Lord himself, and the Gospel telleth us that he saith:

"'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.'"

"He heareth thee, Maude, at all times."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE TOURNAMENT.

HERALDS had travelled throughout the kingdom to proclaim the tournament to be held by the King of England at Ravenscliff; — by no means a mere sport to Cœur de Lion; for he meant that it should be an occasion when, the military enthusiasm at its height, the holy cause should be pressed upon the nobles; and perhaps in no other way could such an impetus be given to the incipient expedition.

The spot chosen was eminently romantic and appropriate. About half a mile from the castle was an extensive slope of the finest green turf, bordered on one side by a line of noble oaks, and on the other by one of those unbroken forests common in those remote days, — the level at the foot, enclosed by a palisade, with an opening at either end for the combatants, having wooden gates wide enough for two horsemen to ride abreast. Two heralds were stationed at each gate. Six trumpets and as many pursuivants, guarded by a strong body of men-at-arms, to preserve order.

There was a platform elevated beyond, on a natural eminence, where were five magnificent pavilions, adorned with pennons of orange and black, the cords of the tents of the same colors.

Before each pavilion hung the shield of the knight, guarded by his esquire in some fantastic disguise. The central pavilion had been assigned to Reginald de Vere, whose renown in all games of chivalry, as well as his knightly character, had obtained for him the distinction of chief on the tilted field. Sir Bryan de Bourg and Sir Amelot de Russy occupied tents on one side of the chief, and Sir Roger d'Evreux and Sir Hugh de Courcy on the other.

A gently sloping passage, ten yards wide, led to the platform on which the tents were pitched. It was strongly secured on each side, as was also the esplanade, and all guarded by men-at-arms.

There was also at the north an access to the lists, a large enclosed space, for such knights as might wish to enter the lists with the challengers. Behind this space were tents, containing refreshments of every kind, armorers, farriers, and others, whose services might be needed. Outside the lists, there were galleries spread with tapestry and carpets, with cushions for the accommodation of those ladies and nobles who were expected. Banners and bandrols floated proudly over the galleries; silk and cloth of gold formed the draperies. Proud escutcheons everywhere proclaimed the presence of the flower of the nobility of England.

A narrow space, much like the pit of a theatre, below the galleries accommodated the yeomanry and spectators of a better degree than the more vulgar. Multitudes of the latter sought places of lookout from large banks of turf prepared for them on an elevated piece of ground. Hundreds perched themselves upon the tree-tops, and even the high

steeple of an old church was crowded with spectators. There was one point, however, of especial interest; for in the centre of the eastern gallery, directly opposite to the spot where the shock of the combat must take place, seats were raised higher than the others, richly decorated, graced by a sort of throne and canopy of cloth of gold, on which the royal arms were emblazoned. Squires, pages, and yeomanry in rich liveries waited around this place of honor, designed for the king and Queen Eleanor. Opposite, raised to the same height, was another seat of honor, more gayly but less sumptuously decorated. A train of pages and young maidens, the most beautiful that could be found, in fancy habits of green and pink, surrounded a throne decorated with the same colors. Airy pennons bearing wounded hearts, bleeding hearts, bows and quivers, and a blazoned inscription, informed the spectators that this seat of honor was designed for the Queen of Love and Beauty.

And now commenced the arrival of the spectators, pressing forward to occupy their respective seats; not, however, without many disputes, which were speedily settled by officers of the field, who, armed at all points, rode up and down to preserve good order.

Gradually the galleries became filled with knights and nobles in their robes of peace; the many richly-tinted colors of their long mantles contrasting strongly with the gayer and more splendid costume of the ladies, who, in a larger proportion than even the men, assembled to witness sports which a modern lady would think too bloody and dangerous for amusement. A few knights-templar mingled with the

crowd, wearing under-tunics of dark purple silk, garnished with furs, over which flowed the long white robe in ample folds; the eight-pointed cross of the order cut on the shoulder of the mantle in black velvet; the high cap removed. The hair was worn in short, thick curls.

The lower space was soon filled by those of inferior orders and such of the lesser gentry who, from modesty, poverty, or other causes, durst not assume a higher place.

But the royal party are entering, announced by the shrill trumpets, the multitude, in their eagerness, rising to their feet to see the spectacle.

The king and queen rode first, on palfreys splendidly caparisoned, attended by a gay and numerous train of laymen and churchmen; the latter as light in their bearing, and gay in their dress, as their companions.

Among the latter was the Prior of St. Albans, in the most gorgeous trim which a church dignitary could assume; his robe one of costly material, over which he wore a cope curiously embroidered. Fur and gold were not spared in his attire; for, beside the heavy golden signet ring which marked his dignity, though contrary to the canon, his fingers were loaded with precious gems. His sandals were of the finest leather, imported from Spain; the points of his boots, exceeding the fashion of the times, turned up so far as to be fastened not to his knees merely, but to his very girdle. His beard was trimmed to as small dimensions as his order would permit, and his shaven crown was concealed by a scarlet cap, richly embroidered.

The king was well mounted, splendidly attired in crimson and gold, bearing on his wrist a falcon. As he caracolled within the lists, at the head of his jovial party, it was with no small share of royal audacity that he criticized the beauties who adorned the galleries; Maude and Eveline evidently attracting his especial notice, who, in the glow of their beauty and the richness of their dress, shone conspicuous among the crowd.

Just at this spot the king halted, and, turning to the prior, said:

"By my halidom, sir prior, we need look no farther for our Queen of Beauty, for the white hand of the Lady Eveline de Vere taketh precedence of all the fair ladies."

"None fairer, my liege," replied the prior; "but, with permission from your grace, it seemeth meet that the fair sovereign's throne remaineth unoccupied until the conqueror shall be named, and then he hath the choice. It addeth another grace to his triumph, and teacheth fair ladies to prize the love which exalteth them to such honor."

Observing signs of impatience among the audience, the royal party took the seats appointed for them, and the king gave the signal to the heralds to proclaim the laws of the tournament.

The lists now presented a most splendid and imposing spectacle. The galleries were crowded with all that was wealthy, great, and beautiful in the northern and middle parts of England; the contrast in the dress adding greatly to the splendor. It was, moreover, one of the brightest of September days, when the sun shone in his glory over the

gorgeous pageant; the grand old trees spreading out their branching arms over the landscape.

The heralds ceased their proclamation with the usual cry of "Largess, largess, gallant knights!" when gold and silver pieces were showered upon them,—it being a boast of chivalry to be liberal to those who were esteemed officers of honor,—the bounty acknowledged by the shouts of "Love of ladies! Death of champions! Glory to the brave! Honor to the generous!" accompanied by the flourish of their martial instruments by a numerous band of trumpeters.

Then the heralds withdrew from the lists in glittering procession, and none remained within save the marshals of the field, who, armed cap-à-pie, sat on horseback, motionless as statues, at the opposite ends.

The large space at the northern end was now crowded with knights, desirous to try their skill against the challengers, who, when viewed from the galleries, looked like a sea of waving plumage,—the glistening helmets and tall lances, each bearing small pennons fluttering in the breeze.

At length the barriers were opened, and five knights, chosen by lot, advanced slowly into the arena; a single champion riding in front, and four others following in pairs, each wearing some token of his lady-love. The champions advanced slowly, restraining their fiery steeds, at the same time exhibiting their paces and the grace of the riders. With thousands of eyes fixed upon them, the knights rode up to the platform where the tents stood, and there separating, each touched slightly, with the lance reversed, the shield of his chosen opponent. Even some of the ladies

seemed disappointed when it was found that they had chosen the arms of courtesy; for the interest of a tournament was generally most intense when the greatest danger was incurred. The champions then retreated to the extremity of the lists, where they remained drawn up in a line.

The interest of the spectators was now on the qui vive; for the challengers, headed by Sir Reginald de Vere, sallied out each from his pavilion, and, mounting their horses, descended from the platform, and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their shields. Now came the flourish of clarions and trumpets, when the spectators arose, the ladies pressing forward in their eagerness, and the combatants rushing out against each other at full gallop. Such was the tremendous force of the shock and the skill of the challengers, that those opposed to four of the knights rolled upon the ground. The fifth alone maintained the honor of his party, and parted with Sir Bryan de Bourg, both splintering their lances without advantage to either. The shouts of the spectators, the acclamations of the heralds, and the flourish of trumpets announced the triumph of the victors and the defeat of the vanquished. The former retreated to their pavilions, and the latter, in dejection, withdrew from the lists, to agree with their victors concerning the redemption of their arms and horses. The fifth only tarried long enough in the lists to be greeted by the applause of the spectators, adding greatly to the mortification of his defeated companions. Several other parties took the field with various success; the advantage, however, remaining with the challengers.

Three knights only appeared on the fourth, avoiding the shields of De Vere and De Bourg. This, however, did not change the character of the combat, for the challengers were still successful.

Then came a long pause; nor did it seem that any one was anxious to renew the encounter; the long interval uninterrupted save by the heralds exclaiming: "Love of ladies! Splintering of lances! Stand forth, gallant knights! Fair eyes look upon your deeds."

The music, also, of the challengers breathed defiance; the old knights lamented in whispers the decay of martial spirit, and agreed that no such dames of beauty could now be found as those which graced the jousts of their young days.

At length, as the king began to talk of making ready the banquet, and awarding the prize to Sir Bryan de Bourg, who had overthrown three knights, the music of the challengers was heard again sounding a wild flourish of fierce triumph, breaking the silence of the lists, answered this time by a note of defiance at the other end.

All eyes were turned now to see the new champion, who, as soon as the barriers were opened, paced into the lists. Mounted on a gallant charger, he advanced straight up to the central pavilion, and struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Reginald de Vere until it rung again.

The families of De Mowbray and De Vere looked on with beating hearts, for the heads of each house were now the combatants; not with arms of courtesy, but of outrance, which proclaimed a real combat of a different and more

dangerous kind. De Mowbray had long desired the opportunity for revenge which was now presented; his early disappointment, the great popularity of the Baron of Ravenscliff, his enormous wealth, the recipient of the favors of the king, who had chosen his castle for the tournament, and, now, the fact that his hated rival was the chief challenger in the eyes of all England, were all so many drops of gall to his already embittered spirit, and with a determination to humble his rival, he stood opposite to De Vere at the extremity of the lists, the public excitement strained to the highest pitch, for the brave knight of Ravenscliff was the most honored of all the neighboring nobles. The trumpets had no sooner given the signal, than the champions vanished from their posts with the speed of lightning, and closed in the centre of the lists with the shock of a thunderbolt. The lances burst into shivers at the very grasp, and it seemed for a moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil upon his haunches.

Maude placed her hand upon her heart and raised one earnest prayer for her father; the Lady Jaqueline gave one faint scream, hiding her face in her hands; Eveline stretched out both arms, as though entreating; Blanche and Alice, clasped in each other's arms, awaited breathlessly the issue of the contest.

By the use of bridle and spur, the riders recovered their steeds, and, glaring at each other an instant with fiery eyes, made a demi-volte, then retiring to the extremity of the lists, received a fresh lance from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, waving of scarfs, and

general plaudits attested the interest taken, for this encounter was the most equal as well as the best sustained of the day. But there is a dead silence, the multitude seeming almost afraid to breathe, for the knights have resumed their station.

A few minutes' pause having been allowed that the combatants and their steeds might recover their breath, when the king with his truncheon signed to the trumpets to sound the onset. The champions a second time sprang from their stations and closed in the centre of the lists with the same violence, but not the same equal fortune as before. In this second encounter, De Mowbray aimed at the centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so forcibly that his spear went to shivers, and De Vere reeled in his saddle. In the beginning of his career, De Vere had directed the point of his lance toward De Mowbray's shield, but suddenly changing his aim, he attacked the helmet, a much more difficult blow, but which he knew would render the shock irresistible.

Yet still De Mowbray maintained his seat, and had not his saddle-girth broken, would not have been unhorsed; as it chanced, however, saddle, man, and horse rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and the fallen steed was but the work of a moment, and stung not only by his defeat, but by the acclamation of the multitude at his rival's victory, he waved his sword in defiance of his conqueror. De Vere, with knightly generosity, refused the present challenge, desiring no farther humiliation, and least of all willing to endanger the life of his enemy.

"We shall meet again, I trust," said De Mowbray, "on foot or horseback, with spear, axe, or sword. I am ready to encounter thee."

"I seek not thy blood, De Mowbray. Why should we prolong a senseless feud?"

"Because I hate thee, Reginald de Vere, crossing my path everywhere."

More angry words would have been exchanged, but the marshals, crossing their lances between the two, compelled them to separate.

Without alighting from his horse, the conqueror called for a bowl of wine, and, opening the lower part of his helmet, announced that he quaffed it "to all true English hearts and to the confusion of foreign tyrants." Retiring to his pavilion, there was another pause in the combat, when the flourish of trumpets summoned others to the lists; answered by a single fierce blast of a trumpet at the lower extremity, the barriers opened, and a youthful knight, mounted on a black charger, paced slowly up the lists. The new adventurer did not much exceed the middle size, and seemed to be rather slender, though strongly made. His suit of armor was formed of steel richly inlaid with gold, a lady's bracelet fastened in his crest. As he rode gallantly along, he gracefully saluted the royal party and the ladies by lowering his lance. The dexterity with which he managed his spirited horse, and the youthful grace displayed by the rider, won for him the favor of the multitude. Moving onward, the champion ascended the sloping platform, and, to the astonishment of all, struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield

of Sir Bryan de Bourg, the most renowned of all the challengers for strength and skill.

Maude's cheek blanched as she recognized the device upon the shield as that of Guy de Mowbray.

She knew much of his skill as a horseman and his bravery as a knight; but a thousand fears filled her heart as she looked at the stalwart frame of his antagonist. At the signal, both rushed with the speed of lightning, and closed in the centre of the lists with tremendous force, retaining their seats manfully. Sir Guy had the advantage of swiftness, Sir Bryan of strength, and in the combat that followed, each strove for the mastery. Both champions broke their lances fairly; but Sir Bryan, who lost a stirrup in the encounter, was judged to have the disadvantage. In the second onset, Guy was equally successful. Striking Sir Bryan so forcibly upon the casque that the fastenings of the helmet broke, and only saved from falling by being unhelmed, he was declared vanquished again. Sir Bryan retiring discomfited to his pavilion, Guy remained master of the field; and challenging Sir Hugh de Courcy, the young knight showed as much courtesy as he had hitherto displayed courage and generosity. De Courcy's horse, which was young and violent, reared and plunged so furiously in the course of the career as to disturb the rider's aim, and Guy, disdaining to take advantage of the circumstance, raised his lance, and, passing his antagonist without touching him, whirled his horse and rode again to his own end of the lists, offering Sir Hugh, by a herald, the chance of a second encounter. This, however, was declined, Sir Hugh acknowledging himself vanquished,

as much by the courtesy as by the skill of his opponent. Sir Amelot de Russy summed up the list of Guy's triumphs, being hurled to the ground with such force that the blood gushed from his nose and mouth, and he was borne senseless from the lists, accompanied by Guy to his pavilion, where proper attention was paid to the disabled knight, Guy then riding his horse backward down the slope which he had just ascended, compelling him to move thus through the lists to the northern extremity, amid the loud shouts of thousands who applauded his graceful horsemanship.

The acclamations of the multitude hailed the announcement that the king awarded the day's honors to Sir Guy de Mowbray. The marshals then led the young knight to the foot of a flight of steps which formed the ascent to the throne of Cœur de Lion, who, with words of strong eulogy upon his valor, caused to be delivered to him the war-horse assigned as the prize to the successful combatant.

With a profound obeisance, Guy replied in a few words to the compliments of the king. The horse was then led into the lists by two grooms in livery, the animal himself fully accoutred with the richest war furniture. Laying one hand upon the pommel of the saddle, Sir Guy vaulted at once upon the back of the steed without using the stirrup, and, brandishing aloft his lance, rode twice around the lists, exhibiting the points and powers of the animal with the skill of a perfect horseman. Those who knew Sir Guy would never think of attributing this display to personal vanity, but saw in the act only a proper method of showing

his appreciation of the princely reward with which he had just been honored.

Amid the renewed plaudits of the spectators, ladies waving their scarfs, pennons fluttering, and the shouts of "Honor to the generous," "Glory to the brave," "Old England forever," Guy passed triumphantly through the lists.

In the meanwhile, the prior reminded the king, in a whisper, that the victor must now display his judgment by selecting from among the beauties who graced the galleries a lady who should occupy the throne of the Queen of Love and Beauty, whose office it should be to deliver the prize of the tourney on the following day. The king accordingly made a sign with his truncheon, as the knight passed him in his career around the lists.

Turning toward the throne, and sinking his lance until the point was within one foot of the ground, Sir Guy remained motionless, as if expecting the king's orders, while the spectators admired the dexterity with which he reduced his fiery steed from a state of violent excitement to the stillness of an equestrian statue.

"Sir Knight," said the king, "it is now your duty, as well as privilege, to name the fair lady who, as Queen of Love and Beauty, is to preside over to-morrow's tourney. Raise your lance."

Sir Guy obeyed, and the king placed upon its point a coronet of green satin, bordered with a circlet of gold, the upper edge relieved by arrow-points, and hearts placed interchangingly, like the leaves upon a ducal crown. The knight then paced slowly around the lists, glancing at the fair faces

which adorned the circle, quite an amusing study to the beholder, as the different characters were displayed in the manner with which they endured the scrutiny.

At length the champion passed beneath the gallery where sat the family of Ravenscliff, and the expectation of the spectators was excited to the utmost.

Sir Guy remained stationary for more than a minute, while the eyes of the silent audience watched his motions; then, gracefully sinking the point of his lance, he deposited the coronet at the feet of Maude de Vere.

The trumpets sounded, and the heralds proclaimed "the Lady Maude de Vere as the Queen" of the day.

They then repeated the cry of "Largess!" that was liberally responded to, and the shout went up from the multitude, "Long live the Lady Maude! the chosen and lawful Queen of Love and Beauty." After the king had offered his salutations to the youthful queen, he stepped aside a moment to make room for the father, who, according to the custom, placed the crown upon the head of the only sovereign. The king then leading the way, followed by his train, retreated from the lists, and the sports of the day had ended. In various routes the company were seen in vast multitudes leaving the gay scene, by far the largest number taking the road to the nearest town, the royal party and a numerous company returning to the castle. Some, bent upon their share of the evening's sports, remained on the ground to enjoy the entertainment afforded by some minstrels, a juggler, a saltimbank, and a story-teller, who tarried behind for the amusement of quite a large audience.

The menials had stripped the galleries of the cushions and tapestry to put them in a place of safety for the night; beyond the precincts, several forges gleaming through the twilight announced the presence of the armorers, who were working all night repairing or altering armor.

A bright moonlight tempted those in the neighborhood to tarry for the sport, and the four made quite a profitable night among the rude peasantry, who seldom met with such brave amusement. The retinue at the castle enjoyed a magnificent banquet; their pleasure much marred, however, by the absence of the De Mowbrays, who durst not brave the displeasure of the baron, after the defeat of the day, but took up their abode for the night at the neighboring town. Everything that could interest a barbarous age was here collected, and the banqueting-hall, the kitchen, and the ballium, all had their minstrels and their jugglers, whose songs and merry-making continued until a late hour of the night.

Note. For the description of the main features of the tournament, the writer is much indebted to Sir Walter Scott, in his novel of Ivanhoe.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE EVIL EYE AT HAWKSWORTH.

THE season for this bright array had been well chosen, for on the second day the sun rose in all his splendor, and at an early hour the company might be seen assembling to select the best appropriated seats.

Although the general combat was much more dangerous than the single, there was no lack of numbers in the knights who sought to enter the lists, Sir Bryan de Bourg leading one party, Sir Guy de Mowbray the other.

About ten o'clock the place was crowded with persons hastening to the tournament, and soon a flourish of trumpets announced the coming of the royal party, finding the queen of the day already there.

With all the princely grace that so well became him, the king rode forward to meet her, doffed his bonnet, and, dismounting, assisted the Lady Maude from her saddle, his followers uncovering at the same time, one of the most distinguished holding her palfrey.

"It is thus," said the king, "that we set the example of loyalty to the Queen of Love and Beauty, and are ourselves her guide to the throne. Ladies," he continued, "attend

your queen, as you wish to be distinguished in like manner." So saying, the king gallantly led Lady Maude to the throne, while the most distinguished present crowded to obtain seats as near as possible to the sovereign of the day. A burst of music greeted her new dignity, half drowned by the shouts of the multitude.

"It was not our choice," said the king to one of the nobles, "for the light and graceful Lady Eveline beareth off the palm of beauty; but the young queen beareth herself with modest grace, and a face of saintly guise blusheth beneath that veil."

The heralds then proclaimed silence, while the laws of the tournament should be rehearsed. They were such as were intended to diminish danger, as the combat was to be with sharp swords and lances; thrusts, however, strictly forbidden. The long procession entered in two imposing files, arraying themselves opposite to each other in the lists, the leader's place in the centre not taken until the ranks were carefully examined by the marshals to see that the numbers were equal.

It was truly a gallant sight; the one hundred knights heavily mounted, richly armed, seated on their war-horses like so many pillars of iron, the steeds pawing the ground, and fiercely neighing in their impatience for the signal. The knights held their lances upright, the sharp points glittering in the sunshine, the gay streamers floating from each over the plumage of their helmets.

It was not only a gallant, but a fearful sight, — that one hundred should be willing, for mere sport, to risk life and limb

in mortal combat. Who can tell the heart-throbs in that gay concourse waiting in the galleries, as mothers, sisters, young maidens, saw among that gallant company those so dearly loved, whose hands they might never clasp again until cold in death. Ah! one quick bound of those throbbing hearts; for there is the dread sound of Hubert Evelyn's voice shouting, in tones of thunder, "Laissez-aller!" The trumpets gave a shrill, fierce call: spears were placed in their rests; spurs plunged into the flanks of the steeds; and, with the speed of lightning, out rushed the two foremost ranks, meeting in the centre with a shock of clanging armor that was heard for a mile distant. For a moment the result was unknown, for the cloud of dust completely bewildered the spectators; but it is all revealed now,—half of the knights were dismounted; some by the powerful lance; some by the weight which had broken down both man and horse; some lay stretched upon the ground as though never to rise again; others had gained their feet, and were closing hand to hand; some that had been wounded were stopping the blood by their scarfs, trying to extricate themselves from the confusion, their squires dragging them out of the press.

The clanging of armor, the neighing of steeds, the fierce battle-cries of the combatants were fearful, as the conflict waged hotter and fiercer. The second file then advanced, the followers of Sir Bryan shouting, "Ha! Beauseant!" "for St. John! for St. John!" the opposite party shouting Sir Guy's watchword on his shield, "Jerusalem and the Holy Cross!" The combat now raged with redoubled fury, success alternating first to the northern, then to the southern

extremity of the lists. Fearful was the conflict now: the clang of the heavy blows, the blasts of the trumpets, the groans of the wounded, who lay helpless beneath the feet of the horses, and even the cries of the ladies, exclaiming, "Brave lance!" "Good sword!" when a successful blow was given, imparted to the whole scene an aspect of the fierce barbarism of these feudal days, even though restrained by the laws of chivalry. But Maude is leaning forward in breathless suspense, for a cry goes up from many voices, "Beware! beware! Sir Guy!"

He is fighting hand to hand with the gigantic arm of Sir Bryan de Bourg; his own dexterity, and the wonderful strength and activity of his horse, making him an equal match for the brave crusader.

But the day is doubtful, for he is beset on the other side by Sir Hugh de Courcy; the quick and powerful blows of the two antagonists telling upon the young knight with fearful power, for he is reeling in his saddle.

Maude and Alice de Mowbray are seated together, with blanched cheeks and distended eyes, watching the conflict, the former calling upon the blessed Saviour, the latter upon the calendar of the saints, while Blanche de Lacy is stopping her ears, and covering her face in silent anguish.

"To the rescue! to the rescue!" shouts Lancelot de Vere, and joined by two brave knights, they are dealing heavy blows upon the assailants. Lancelot has lost neither lance nor sword; with great activity and force, he deals a blow from behind, seconded by his companion, upon the sword of Sir Bryan, which sends it flying from his hand; he has

already lost his lance, and nothing remains now but his battle-axe. Seeing the situation of the brave young knight, several more joined the fight; some, however, for Sir Bryan as well as for Sir Guy, and the cries are shouted by the heralds, "Fight on, brave knights!" "Man dies, but glory lives! Fight on, death is better than defeat! Fight on, brave knights, for bright eyes behold your deeds!"

Both parties display great bravery, and the multitudes watch the conflict with breathless interest. Lancelot is ever between his brother-in-arms and his foe, doing deeds of wonder, and Guy is laying heavy blows about him upon both of his antagonists. Aiming at Sir Bryan's helmet, he deals the blow which, followed by another from Lancelot, stunned the strong crusader, and, reeling in his saddle, he fell beneath his horse's feet. Guy saw the defeat, and calling to his own squire, he said:

"Draw the brave knight away quickly."

At that moment, a skilful blow from Sir Hugh de Courcy laid Sir Lancelot low, blood gushing from a wound in the side; and the king, anxious to save further bloodshed, threw down his warder, and put an end to the conflict.

Thus ended the memorable field of Ravenscliff, — one of the most gallantly contested of the age; for although but three knights died upon the field (one smothered by the heat of his armor), yet more than twenty were desperately wounded; four or five of whom never recovered. Several were disabled for life, and those who escaped best, carried the marks of the conflict to the grave with them.

The king, without hesitation, named Sir Guy de Mow-

bray as victor of the field; and through a field slippery with blood, and covered with broken armor and the bodies of slain and wounded horses, the marshals conducted the young knight to the foot of King Richard's throne.

"Sir Guy de Mowbray, we a second time award to thee the honors of the tournament; we award to thee the right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty the chaplet so richly merited by deeds of knightly valor."

Sir Guy bowed low, murmuring a few modest words; and while the trumpets sounded, and the heralds proclaimed honor to the brave, while ladies waved their silken kerchiefs and embroidered veils, the marshals conducted Sir Guy across the lists to the foot of the throne occupied by the youthful queen of the day.

The victor knelt upon the lowest step of the throne, his helmet in the marshal's hand; and the Lady Maude, descending from her station with a dignified step, placed the chaplet upon his head, saying:

"I bestow upon thee this chaplet, sir knight, as the meed of valor assigned to this day's conqueror;" pausing a moment, and then adding, in a lower tone: "and upon brows more worthy could a wreath of chivalry never be placed."

Sir Guy stooped his head, and kissed the hand of the lovely sovereign by whom he had been rewarded.

But let us pay a visit to the brave young knight lying wounded in his father's pavilion.

"Art badly hurt?" said Sir Guy, as he clasped the hand of his brother-in-arms.

"Naught but a scratch," replied the wounded man; "and that be well borne for thee, Guy."

"A mere flesh-wound," said the leech, as Guy turned an anxious glance upon his face.

"I trow that thou art the crowned knight, Guy," said his friend; "for no more valiant arm wielded the sword and lance on the field of Ravenscliff."

"It were hard to say, Lancelot, were I the judge; but so the king hath ordered."

King Richard held his high festival at a castle in the neighborhood, belonging to a nobleman absent in the Holy Land. Anxious to dazzle men's eyes by his magnificence and generosity, he had given large orders, and, with the full authority of royalty, his purveyors had swept the country of all that could be desired for so grand an entertainment. Guests were invited in great numbers; and especially anxious to seek popularity at this time, he had extended his invitations to many of the gentry as well as the nobility.

The tables groaned with good cheer; the cooks having exerted all their art in varying the dishes. Delicacies were brought from foreign parts, and a quantity of rich pastry, as well as simnel bread and wastle cakes, used only at the tables of the nobles. The banquet was crowned, too, with the richest wines, both foreign and domestic.

The long feast at length had its end; and while the goblet circulated freely, and martial music gave zest to the feast, the king had not forgotten the great object which had been the moving motive in all this gathering of the people of his kingdom.

The marshal gave notice that the king was about to speak, and silence pervaded the banqueting-hall.

"Truly this is a gallant company," said the king, as he glanced down over the retinue of brave knights in their heavy armor. "Why tarry so many at home, when the call from Palestine summoneth the faithful from all Europe to avenge the cause of our slaughtered brethren, and to redeem the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of infidels? It is our sworn intention to march on a crusade in the winter. Who joineth the army of the Lord?"

Not a right hand was wanting in the audience; for all were raised to heaven in token of the solemn vow to follow the king, the crusader's battle-cry bursting from every lip: "It is the will of God."

"Money and men be needed in large supplies," continued the king.

"There be no lack of either throughout England," said Sir Amelot de Russy.

The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, and the lion-hearted king had reason to rejoice in the success of his present enterprise, for men of all grades were ready to rush into the ranks that were preparing for the third crusade.

"The spirit of the crusader is fully awake," said the king to De Vere. "And now we summon all England to the expedition, we count largely upon the Baron of Ravenscliff."

"Thou mayest be sure, my liege, of loyal service; but ere our departure, I see thee at London."

"Thou art welcome at our palace, De Vere. And the twin

queens of beauty come in thy train, I trow they would create a stir at court, for no such loveliness have we among Queen Eleanor's court ladies."

The Lady Eveline blushed at the compliment, and looking eagerly toward the baron, she said:

"Thou sayest not nay, good father, I ween."

But Maude, less eager for court gayeties, replied:

"I cry thee mercy, my liege, for the glitter of a court hath no attractions to tempt me from old Ravenscliff."

Sir Walter de Courtenay, one of the retinue in the train of the king, stood near his royal master, and, regarding the Lady Eveline with looks of admiration, joined his desires to those expressed by the royal visitor.

"Thou wilt not say me nay, fair lady, for there is much to draw a young demoiselle to the palace; and Queen Eleanor maketh thee welcome."

The royal party have departed — the king to make vigorous preparations for the expedition, and the Baron of Ravenscliff to fulfil his solemn vow. The excitement of the tournament at an end, Maude was glad to return to her quiet employments and her lonely turret.

A cool September morning finds Maude in her sanctum of holy rest. The gentle breeze is fanning her brow, as it steals in through the open casement; and the red stork is singing still his joyful carol in the nest built in the wall-flower, for it is too soon yet to leave his northern home.

Maude has another treasure now of old Latin hymns, which the monk has lent to his favorite,—Ambrose and

Prudentius, John of Damascus, St. Bernard, and Bernard of Cluny, all singing to her in the sweet language of the original.

The scenes through which she had so lately passed had sorely disturbed the serenity of her spirit, for flashing armor and the heat of barbarous warfare suited not the tone of a mind that held daily communion with the Saviour; and conscious of a sense of weariness, the sweet hymn that follows tranquillized her hour of retirement:

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distrest?
'Come to me,' saith One, 'and, coming,
Be at rest.'

"Hath He marks to lead me to Him,
If He be my Guide?
'In His feet and hands are wound-prints,
And His side.'

"Is there diadem, as monarch,
That His brow adorns?
'Yea, a crown in very surety,
But of thorns!'

"If I find Him, if I follow,
What His guerdon here?
'Many a sorrow, many a labor,
Many a tear!'

"If I still hold closely to Him,
What hath He at last?
'Sorrow vanquished, labor ended,
Jordan past!'

"If I ask Him to receive me,
Will He say me Nay?
'Not till earth, and not till heaven
Pass away!'

"Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is He sure to bless?
'Angels, martyrs, prophets, virgins,
Answer, Yes!'"

And so Stephen the Sybarite, nearly four hundred years before, had sung the hymn which now found its answer in the heart of Maude de Vere; so much of oneness is there in the inner life of all God's saints in every age. How very precious are the words of the dear Lord to-day!

It is true that Maude had borne her part in the tournament,—for the customs of the times had sanctioned them for many years,—but her real self had so little to do with those anti-Christian sports, that while the young demoiselles below were rehearsing daily the incidents connected with the royal visit, Maude had well-nigh forgotten that she had been the Queen of Love and Beauty, the envied of many a young aspirant.

There is a knock at the door, and Wilfred d'Arcy presents himself.

"Sir Guy de Mowbray sendeth me with his devoirs, and a message to the Lady Maude, and craveth a hearing to-night in the chapel at ten o'clock. What answer bear I in return?"

"Tell him that I will be there, good Wilfred; and thou wilt attend me at that hour."

Accordingly, at the appointed hour, we find Maude in the chapel; Guy already there, who advanced to meet the young lady, leading her to a seat near the altar, while Wilfred tarried at the door.

"Wilt thou be seated a moment, Maude," said the young knight; "for I have much to say to thee ere I seek the Holy Land? I trow that it may be many a long year ere we clasp hands again, Maude."

"Art really going, Guy? But why this secrecy?"

"My father, the Baron of Hawksworth, forbiddeth intercourse between the two households. Syth the tournament, his anger be redoubled; and he chargeth trespasses on the hunting-grounds of Hawksworth by the retainers of Ravenscliff. Were it not for the present stir about the crusades, I trow that thou wouldst have sore distress at Ravenscliff; for it lacketh no further cause of strife to array the two barons against each other as mortal foes."

"We be glad then, Guy, that the crusades calleth off the thoughts from such warfare."

"I am pledged to the king on his setting sail, as also is Lancelot, an' he be well enow; for we be his chosen knights to attend upon his own royal person; and I come now to say farewell."

Between the windows, over the altar, there was a picture of the Virgin Mother, on which the moon was shining; and Guy, turning his eyes in that direction, said:

"Look, Maude! doth not the Holy Mother seem to smile upon us? I trow that our holy work pleaseth her well!"

"I would rather have the smiles of Jesus, Guy. An' thou mayst have them an' thou askest the Lord."

"Wilt pray for me, Maude, when I am far away? for thy prayers, sweet saint, I trow, availeth much in heaven."

"Thou mayst be sure of my poor service, Guy. Thou wilt not forget me in the distant land? See! here is my scarf. Wilt wear it, Guy?"

Taking off her blue scarf, she bound it over the shoulder of the knight, who replied:

"That inspireth me to deeds of valor, Maude."

"I have something yet more precious, Guy, and thou must take it with thee to the Holy Land." Taking the small manuscript from her pocket, she handed it to her companion, and said:

"Kneel, Guy, while we ask God's blessing on his own precious Gospel."

Side by side they knelt before the altar, and Maude, in solemn tones, uttered her simple words of prayer.

"Go with this blessed Gospel; for it is thine, dear Lord. May the Spirit of all truth take its holy words, and make them a light to the path of the pilgrim who goeth forth to holy warfare in thy service, Lord. Defend thy young servant, and bring him at last home to the paradise above."

They arose deeply solemnized; and Maude continued:

"Thou carriest this Gospel, Guy, under thy coat of mail. Read it daily, and mayst thou love its precious words because they be our Lord's. It is the first that I give away; for it be my own writing; and now I see the fruit of my labor."

"I will never part with it, Maude, an' it be only for thy ake. But how fareth thy brother Lancelot?"

"Better, Guy, but weak from the loss of blood; more se-erely wounded than he chose to tell thee. Thou wilt be aithful to him, Guy, and send tidings an' thou canst of thy elfare."

"Now, farewell, my own dear Maude. I must not detain hee longer, for this chapel is very cold."

They clasped hands before the altar; and Maude, with treaming eyes, said, in low, soft tones:

"I ever thought that it would be so. Farewell! fare-ell! and may God forever bless thee!"

Throwing his arm around the waist of the young damsel, Maude's head drooped upon his shoulder, and, pressing his ips fondly upon the fair brow, he whispered:

"Farewell, sweet one! and may the blessed Virgin, and ll the saints, protect thee!"

Guy watched her departing figure as she walked slowly lown the aisle, and joined Wilfred at the door. Guy then astened his departure from Hawksworth.

Maude had no concealments from her mother, and next lay communicated the news of Guy's departure and the ainful knowledge of his father's increasing enmity. The Lady Jaqueline had long been conscious of the fact, and re-arded the approaching crusade as a blessing, — turning the houghts of the grim baron in another channel, — for the evil ye at Hawksworth had followed the family for many years.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

LANCELOT is still confined to his couch, although mending rapidly; and Maude is a daily visitor. The confinement is galling to a spirit like his, and his sister's ministry is peculiarly soothing.

"Hast brought thy cithern, Maude?" said the brother, smiling. "I see thou hast thy book, too."

"I have just learned one of St. Bernard's sweet hymns, Lancelot. Shall I sing it?"

"Thy voice is ever soothing, Maude;" and, closing his eyes, Lancelot composed himself for listening.

"O Jesu! Thou the beauty art
Of angel worlds above;
Thy name is music to the heart,
Enlightening it with love.

"O my sweet Jesu! hear the sighs
Which unto Thee I send;
To Thee mine inmost spirit cries,
My being's hope and end.

"Stay with us, Lord, and with Thy light
Illume the soul's abyss;
Scatter the darkness of our night,
And fill the world with bliss.

"O Jesu! spotless virgin-flower!
Our love and joy! to Thee
Be praise, beatitude, and power
Through all eternity."

"Very sweet, sister mine!" said the invalid; "but it seemeth a strangely familiar way of worshipping our Lord."

"Thou wouldst not think so, Lancelot, an' thou readest the holy Gospel; for there be naught but words which bringeth us very close to the dear Lord. Let me read a few."

Running her eyes hastily over the text, she said, as though speaking to herself:

"Here be miracles of power, but all full of love and mercy. Here is the blessed talk with Nicodemus, so full of the love of God, his precious teaching about himself; then the resurrection comfort; then the chapter about the heavenly food, that bread from heaven. Such goodness! such mercy! such love! Where shall I commence?"

"Take thy choice, Maude; the Lord's words must all be good, I trow."

"Listen, Lancelot! 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

"'I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth

in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.'

"Thou knowest how the branches be nourished by the vine, Lancelot," continued his sister; "but they must be united to it to get the benefit. Canst think how we be nourished by the Lord?"

"We must be in him, I trow, by being a part of his body the Church."

"There seemeth something more than that, Lancelot; for Judas belongeth to the Church, and, certes! he was no branch of the true vine."

"How know we then, Maude, an' we are in the true vine?"

"By the Spirit which he giveth us, Lancelot. Father Ambrose telleth us that by holy baptism we be made members of Christ; but how can we believe that the wicked people all around us are members of the true vine, when they bring forth no holy fruits?"

"Doth not the Gospel teach as Father Ambrose, Maude?"

"I trow not; for not a word about praying to the saints and doing penance do we see in all the blessed book. I trow, Lancelot, when the blessed Lord hung upon Calvary, he did all the work of our salvation, and that when he said 'It is finished!' he meaneth more than giving up the ghost."

"Thou learnest much from the blessed Gospel, Maude."

"Wouldst read the book an' I leave it with thee, Lancelot? Thou wilt be a soldier of the cross, I trow; and when

thou art far away, the holy Gospel comforteth and blesseth thee, Lancelot."

"Thou be a holy saint, Maude; and I promise thee to read the holy book."

"That is the second that I have given: who knoweth what the good seed bringeth forth?"

And so another copy of the blessed Gospel was laid by Maude in the hands of one she loved.

The trumpets of the tournament are echoing still through all classes, and multitudes are meditating upon the new crusade. The lion-hearted king, with all the impetuosity of his nature, is stirring up the kingdom, and making vigorous efforts to raise the funds necessary for such an expedition. In the meanwhile, the news of the calamity at Rome had reached England; for in three days after Pope Urban heard of the fall of Jerusalem, crushed by a broken heart, his remains were deposited in the church at Ferrara, and a new pope immediately elected.

Determined not to abandon the sacred cause, the new pope appointed the Archbishop of Tyre to visit France, Germany, and England, for the purpose of rousing up the people, and sending out a third crusade; and the King of England has appointed the mitred Abbey of St. Hilary as a fitting place for meeting.

The refectory of the abbey was prepared for the solemn audience; and seldom had a more magnificent array of kingly glory been displayed. Gorgeous tapestry hung from the walls, hiding the rare beauty of the vaulting shafts in a blaze of lustre. At the upper end, beneath a canopy, sat

King Richard, in his royal robes; the crown on his head, the sceptre in his hand. On his left, a vacant place was reserved for the archbishop, around which clustered the earls, barons, and knights. The princesses and ladies of the court occupied seats on the right. The high-roofed building glittered with a hundred wax lights, and two metallic crowns, suspended from the ridge-beam, carried each forty tapers, shedding a flood of brilliancy over the knightly armor and the sparkling jewels of the ladies.

Knightly hearts beat high in the prospect of a third crusade. Bright eyes looked their warm approval, and sweet voices were ready to bid them God speed.

In this objective age, when the worship of the Christian Church was so highly sensuous, such an occasion seemed the very season for exhibitions of the greatest self-sacrifice. Accordingly, in that crowded assembly were many hearts ready for any deed of heroic valor, if by this they could hope to relieve the exiles in the Holy Land, who were giving away their lives in their zeal for what was deemed the highest act of Christian devotion. Among these knights, none were more deeply imbued with religious fervor than the Baron of Ravenscliff, nor among the Norman ladies were any more saintly than the Lady Maude. It remained for a future age, when, after the Reformation, a subjective era of piety dawned upon the world, to afford objects upon which to expend Christian energy. Then amidst the explosion of the old superstitions, the effete mummeries of Romanism burnt out, and "the just shall live by

faith" glittered like stars of glory in the Christian firmament, — then dawned the age of active piety.

The door at the lower end opened, and, introduced by the lord abbot, the Archbishop of Tyre entered. His face was sad; for at home he had seen the dissensions of the crusaders and the defeat of the holy cause. Throughout Europe, he had met with naught but discouragement; and his hopes were now all centred in the lion-hearted King of England.

Joselyn de Vallier, the Master of the Hospitallers, followed, clad from head to foot in a coat of scaled mail, the picture of a soldier monk. Then followed two hospitallers and two templars, bearing respectively the banner of the kingdom, the keys of the sepulchre, those of the tower of David, and of the Holy City.

Amid profound silence, the archbishop and De Vallier stepped forward, and, after making due obeisance, the former spoke:

"Behold, O great king! the banner and the keys of Jerusalem, which we lay at your feet. The holy city hath fallen, — the city that for eighty-eight years was under Christian rule is now under the foot of Saladin. Blood hath flowed like oceans, our great princes have fallen, our people are exiles, and the holy places are polluted by the tread of infidels.

"I witnessed the marching out of the long procession; the weeping queen in her litter, followed by seculars and religious orders. Then came knights and men-at-arms; then burgesses, with their families; then the poor and destitute,

and, lastly, a strong body of Christian cavalry to protect the rear from insult.

"Then I heard the shouts of the infidels ringing from Mount Calvary to the Mount of Olives. I can never forget the terrible cry. Saladin entered first, followed by thousands, sounding still the same taunting shouts. Hammer and axe were busy; ladders were planted against the churches; bells cracked beneath the thundering sledge; crosses tottered and fell; altars were shattered and defaced; pictures and images trampled on the ground. Twenty men scaled the temple,—a cable being fixed to the great cross of gilt copper that surmounted its dome. Some struck at it with maces; some tried to wrench it with levers; some pulled from below, while hundreds stood by to shout and cheer. It resisted the ungodly assault for a long time. At length, with a tremendous effort, it was heaved off, and thundering down from its height crashed in the street below.

"Its fate afterward was still more terrible; for it was sent as a trophy to the Sultan of Bagdad, who, overjoyed, proclaimed a public holiday. Then the holy cross was dragged through the streets of the city, covered with filth, trampled on and spurned, and at length thrown into the place where the sewers discharged themselves.

"These, great king, are the horrors that I have seen. I have appealed to Christendom; still no assistance comes. It is true that we are justly punished for our sins; but this pertaineth to God, not man, to punish us. If from God we hope for remission, surely from man we may expect assist-

ance. We have gone from noble to noble, from court to court; we have wept and prayed; we have besought and implored; and now, as our last resource, we turn, O mighty king! unto thee. From his Holiness we come furnished with indulgences. They that in penitence take the cross are at once absolved from their sins. They are dispensed from the obligation of fasting, and other penal works. His Holiness chargeth himself with the care of their families and effects; and, dying in Holy Land, they shall, if they continue in the same condition of soul, go at once into Paradise. In the name, then, of all those who have fallen in defence of that blessed religion for which we still fight, — in the name of those glorious saints who, from time to time, have so manifestly battled for us, — for Godfrey de Bouillon, of saintly memory, hath been seen by many of the crusaders, — above all, in His name, who there conversed with men; who there, by the space of thirty-three years and upward, left us our example; who there accomplished the salvation of man by His most precious death and passion, and who there ascended into the kingdom of Heaven, — I beseech your gracious majesty to take the vow of serving in person in the Holy Land."

"We have already, holy father," replied the king, "taken advice with our council in this matter. For ourselves, our whole heart is in this enterprise, and we gladly offer our life, our money, and our army for the holy cause of warring against accursed Paynimrie. We shall summon a great council of lords, to be holden at Westminster, on St. Michael and All Angels' day, when this matter shall be finally dis-

cussed. We not only give license to such of our subjects as shall be willing to take the cross, and furnish them with all arms and necessaries for the voyage, and money for their sustenance as long as they serve in Holy Land, but we head the army in our own person, God and St. George being our helpers."

"Now God be praised!" said the bishop, tears of joy filling his eyes. "These are the only words of hearty goodwill syth I left Palestine. God and the holy saints bless and keep you, Richard Plantagenet, mighty King of England."

Then stepping forward, the king said in brave, clear tones:

"Holy father, I will make my vow in your hands."

"Kneel down, my liege," said the bishop, taking his seat in the chair prepared for him, and in the midst of that august assembly the king, kneeling, said:

"I, Richard Plantagenet, King of England, knight, do, for the love of God, and the remission of my sins, promise and vow, in the sight of the Holy Trinity, the most blessed Virgin Mary, the holy apostles SS. Peter and Paul, St. Michael the archangel, and all saints, service in the Holy Land in our own person for the length of the crusade. And we further promise and vow, as aforesaid, and for the afore sacred ends, to maintain an army fully equipped, and so help us God, at our utmost need."

Then followed Sir Reginald de Vere and Sir Lancelot, his son; Sir Richard de Mowbray and many other knights taking the same vow, with alterations according to their

rank and circumstances. There was a pause of a moment in the solemn ceremony, when the Lady Jaqueline de Vere stepped forward also. Observing her hesitate, the bishop inquired, in a gentle voice of encouragement:

"What wouldest thou, daughter?"

"I would do that," she replied, "which my lord and husband hath even now done."

With hands clasped and eyes bent upon the floor, the Lady Maude followed her mother.

"Kneel on either side of the knight, my daughters," directed the bishop, and, in a voice that trembled with emotion, each separately took the vow of pilgrimage to the Holy City, and of doing all that in them lay to serve the warriors of the cross.

Other noble ladies followed; and, amid a silence that might be felt, the bishop spoke.

"And I," said the prelate, "by the authority of our Lord and his blessed apostles SS. Peter and Paul, and all saints, and by the authority of the Holy See, in this case especially committed unto me, do, as far as the keys of holy Mother Church extend, absolve you from all guilt of excommunication, interdict, or any other sentence which, knowingly or ignorantly, you have to this hour incurred. I absolve you from all sins confessed, particularly or generally, or which, if they had been remembered, would have been confessed. I absolve you from all offences against God, and offences against your neighbor, from fault and from punishment. I close, by the authority of blessed St. Peter, Vicar of Christ, the gates of hell and purgatory, and I open those of Para-

dise; and in token hereof receive the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," and with these words, he attached round the neck of the knights, and to the right shoulder of the ladies, the red cross pattee, that separated them from the world and marked them out for God. "Provided always," he continued, "that in case you fail to perform this vow, the absolution received becometh null and void, and yourselves incur the penalty of excommunication, according to the canon in that case provided. Now the God of armies be praised," continued the bishop, "who hath put it into the heart of the King of England to undertake this holy crusade; for we hope much from the strong arm and brave spirit of your gracious majesty."

"God and St. George prosper our cause," was the reply.

"Amen! amen!" answered the bishop.

The conference broke up amid a flourish of trumpets; but, ere they separated, a midnight mass was held at the abbey. The splendid church was gorgeously illuminated, the pictures all uncovered, and, amid the grandest music of those days, the imposing procession filed into the church; the bishop and clergy in their most showy vestments, the king in royal robes, the ladies in their court magnificence, and the nights in glittering armor, — royalty and knighthood and Norman loveliness in all their glory; and perhaps never again in that century would such a spectacle be seen.

Strong contrast with the days of the lowly Nazarene, of whom we can remember but two processions, — one on entering Jerusalem on the humblest of animals; the utmost that can be said of worldly applause that it came from the

children, whose youthful voices shouted "Hosanna!" and strewed simple palm leaves in his way. No mitred bishops, no swinging incense, no gorgeous vestments nor glittering banners, no worldly pomp was there. Then that other, along the Via Dolorosa, — the mocking robe, the crown of thorns, the shameful cross, the jeering multitude on the way to Calvary. These were the Lord's processions. What must he have thought of the pomp of those Romish shows in that day, and of their childish imitations in this later day?

All hearts in this old abbey were filled with the great idea of redeeming the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidels; and it is probable that the fanatical leaders of that day felt as if the smiles of Heaven must be bestowed upon a cause so holy. Very different emotions, however, filled the hearts of the worshippers.

The king was seeking worldly glory, and many sympathized with him. The archbishop really sincere in his mistaken zeal, and Maude felt as if life itself might well be offered upon the altar of sacrifice, if thus the Holy Land could be redeemed. After the celebration of the Mass, the procession marched several times around the church, singing the old recessional hymn of the Royal Banners. Then the multitude separated, and henceforth all England was astir in preparations for the third crusade. Men of all ranks, stimulated by the example of the king, were eager to enlist; and the sign of the cross was seen everywhere upon the numbers waiting for an opportunity to embark.

Ravenscliff was no longer a peaceful garrison, at ease on

their arms; for the din of warlike preparation was heard from morning until night. The baron is frequently absent summoning his retainers, who were arriving in companies to register their names, to procure arms, and to receive orders. Each day now was heard the shrill trumpet marshalling the companies that were training in the ballium of the castle, and the fierce neigh of the war-horses exercising in the tilting-yard. The cleaning and repairing of arms occupied the time not employed in military exercises, and once a week there was a grand review in the ballium, where four thousand men-at-arms were drilled by their commanders. But that which interested the ladies of the castle most, was the gallant display of five hundred cavalry, mounted on spirited chargers, going through their military evolutions with matchless skill and fire.

The banners of England and Jerusalem floated from the towers of the keep, and every evening the military music of the castle practised in the tilting-yard.

Everywhere the martial spirit prevailed, and more precious than ever were Maude's sweet hours in the turret, for she felt that they were drawing to a close.

Lancelot had quite recovered, and, summoned by the king, he had joined the army gathered around the royal person, where he had also met Guy de Mowbray. Old Cicely was frequently found in tears at the thought of losing her valued mistress and the dear young demoiselles, and Maude tried to comfort the faithful servant of so many years.

"Be not so sorely grieved, good Cicely," said the young

lady; "we be on a holy errand. The Lord and his saints be with us; and the holy work done, we return again to the old castle."

"I wish that I might go with thee, Lady Maude. What doest thou an thou be sick in that far-off land?"

"Thou art too old, good Cicely. Tarry thou at home, and take care of Father Ambrose. Let him not miss his good ale and furmety; but I know that thou wilt be good to the old friar."

Cicely wiped away the tears, and said:

"I trow that it is a good and holy work that calleth thee away; but it seemeth that women had fain tarry at home."

"What becometh, then, of the wounded and the dying, Cicely? Women may not join the warfare, but they can bind up the bleeding limbs of the soldiers of the cross."

"Thou wert ever a saint, Lady Maude. I trust that thou mayst sit once more in the little turret, with the blessed Gospel. But last night I dreamed that I saw thee there, and thou didst smile upon me in such a loving and holy way; and just as I was about to touch thee, thou vanishest out of the casement; and the last that I saw of thee was thine own sweet smile, and a pair of white wings that soared upward to the sky."

"And so, good Cicely, thou thinkest that never again sit I in the lonely turret. And what then? I be in sweet Paradise, with my Lord and the holy angels; and it mattereth not whether I go there from the castle of Ravenscliff or from the fields of Palestine."

"It mattereth much to me, dear Lady Maude; for an the

Lord taketh thee away, I wis that thou liest in thy father's chapel, whither I might go and look at thy dear name upon the marble, like the Lady Eleanor that sleepeth there, with her feet upon a hound, her hands clasped in prayer, and her eyes fixed upon the image of the crucified."

"The Lord doeth all things well, Cicely; an I do his blessed will, I leave all the rest to him."

This was the sweet spirit of self-resignation with which Maude contemplated her vow.

Just as expectation was at the highest point, from some sudden caprice, King Richard delayed the expedition. Many who were fully prepared waited not for the tardy sovereign, but in large numbers passed over into the Holy Land and joined themselves to Guy of Lusignan, who had now collected the remnants of all the military orders, and, with the princes and knights who had escaped the Moslem scimetar, was engaged in besieging Acre, — his forces thus become immense. Saladin pitched his tent on the mountains to the south not long after the Christians had commenced the siege, and innumerable battles in the open field succeeded, in which neither army gained any material advantage that was not soon compensated by some following reverse. Both sides were so well supplied with provisions that the conflict seemed interminable, from the equal force and zeal of the contending parties.

## CHAPTER XV.

### EVELINE AT COURT.

FINDING that the king delayed his departure until December, the Baron of Ravenscliff postponed his own motions until spring, and Maude was busily engaged with her favorite employments all winter.

Wilfred is making real progress now in the study of the Gospel. We will take our seat by the side of the two when the page is able to read slowly, but correctly, his first chapter in the blessed book.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

"Thinkest thou, Lady Maude," said the reader, "that it be that blessed Teacher which speaketh to me in the night season? for the voice bringeth many past sins to my remembrance; but with it ever cometh the voice of a Saviour's love."

"Doubtless it be the Holy Spirit. And I have long watched thee, good Wilfred; and now I ween that thou art among the blessed ones whom Jesus meaneth when he utereth these words:

"'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Blessed art thou, good Wilfred, an the Father draweth thee; for listen again to these precious words:

"'And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.' Dost thou thus believe, Wilfred? An it be so, the promise belongeth unto thee of a surety."

Deeper draughts of the pure fountain of truth were drunk all the winter season, and much happiness did Maude find in the docile spirit of the young student.

Eveline's head was completely intoxicated with the prospect of a visit to London; and the young damsels in the 'broiderie room spent much time in discussing the pleasures in store for the youthful beauty. Having been long aware of Maude's employments, hitherto she has had no reason for trespassing upon her retirement; but one day we find her knocking at the door of the turret.

"Can I come in, Maude?" said the voice in the corridor.

Opening the door, Maude took her sister's hand, greeting her with a pleasant smile.

"Certes thou art welcome, sister mine," said the young student, kissing the rosy cheek. "It pleaseth me well to see thee; but what bringeth thee to this quiet turret, Eveline? My work here is very serious; but to me very precious."

"Yea, truly, I wot what thou art doing, Maude; but now I come to ask thy help, for the time be growing very short,

and I am not half ready for my journey. The damsels below have their hands full with my kirtles and tunics; but I must e'en have thy skilful fingers on my wimple and my gloves, sweet one."

"What wouldst thou, Eveline? I am ready to help thee, sister mine."

"I must have my wimple embroidered with silver thread, and my gloves with silk. I have brave patterns; but none can 'broider as thou canst. Wilt help me, Maude?"

"I begin them to-day an thou willest it; but I like not the journey to the court, sweet one; for methinketh that Sir Walter de Courtenay looketh upon thee with a lover's eyes, sister mine; and what do I without thee in this old castle?"

Eveline blushed deeply as she took from her girdle a note of rose-colored paper, fastened with a small silver arrow through the impression of a heart.

"This cometh from London, Maude; and syth writing I read not, I bring it to thee to read for me."

Maude opened the billet, and read:

"To the Lady Eveline de Vere:

These few hasty lines be written to the lady of my heart, praying that she cometh truly to Westminster with the noble baron. I count the weary days and hours, hoping to see thee, sweet one, ere many days pass by. There be many banquets in store for thee, fair lady, among the highest in the land. Queen Eleanor fitteth up thy bower daintily, and hath already installed Winifred Bertram, of gentle birth, to be thy bower-woman. One word let me write, and when thou readest, destroy this note. Be thou very coy and distant toward the king; for, though a brave and gallant

knight, he is no fitting admirer of a young maiden. I would write this to my own fair sister Mabel. Come speedily, sweet one, and thou wilt be truly welcome to thine own true knight, WALTER DE COURTENAY.

WESTMINSTER, St. Agnes's Eve."

The bright smile and rosy cheek with which Eveline listened, betrayed the pleasure given by these few hasty lines.

"He will be thy lover, Eveline; and I shall lose thee, sweet one," said Maude; "but ere thou goest, let me show thee my work," and, bringing out her manuscript, she laid it before her sister.

"It must have cost thee much toil, sister mine," said the young lady.

"Some toil, it is true, Eveline, but more of blessedness. Would that thou couldst read it, sister mine! I have taught Wilfred. Wouldst thou not spare one hour daily?"

"Not now, Maude. Wait until I return, and then I come to thee daily."

"Thou wilt not, Eveline; for thy young heart will be filled with other thoughts."

"What colors would'st thou choose for my gloves, Maude?"

"Not too many. I would like small rose-buds and green leaves."

"That would be brave, indeed! But what for my net, Maude?"

"Seed-pearls are really the loveliest, sister."

"The good baron, my father, hath promised me a new set

of jewels when I go to court. What sayest thou to diamonds, Maude?"

"Very showy, Eveline; but suit thyself, sweet one. Now let me read thee a few verses of my blessed Gospel ere thou leavest me."

But the precious words fell upon pre-occupied soil; and, as Eveline left the turret, she turned back once more to say:

"I must have two wimples, Maude, one of gold and one of silver thread. So come down soon; for we go in ten days," and the sister heard her retreating figure singing a merry air of Provence all the way down the long flight of stone steps, until the voice faded in the distance, still carolling her gay song as she entered the 'broiderie room.

Very beautiful was the delicate work so gracefully wrought by Maude's skilful fingers, and when it was really completed, all the young damsels crowded around to praise the skill with which she had traced the lovely flowers.

It was cold when they started on their journey; Eveline in a litter, warmly clad in woollen garments trimmed with fur, and hood of the same materials, attended by a numerous retinue of men-at-arms. Stopping for the night by the way, it was several days ere they reached London, where they were warmly greeted by the king and Queen Eleanor.

"There be many waiting for thee, fair lady," said the latter; "one coming daily to wot of the motions of the Lady Eveline de Vere. He be in the ante-chamber now."

Calling an attendant, she sent for Sir Walter de Courtenay, who betrayed, in a way not to be mistaken, the deep interest felt in the young stranger.

The first greetings over, a lady in waiting conducted Eveline to her bower, where Winifred Bertram was ready to receive her. Her first desire was rest; for the journey had been long and wearisome; but after a few hours we find her ready for the hands of her attendant, who spared no pains in adorning the beautiful creature before her.

For the first evening, Eveline was introduced to a select number, who looked, some with envy, others with unmingled admiration, upon the new star in their midst; for certainly there were none present who could bear any comparison with the stranger.

The undisguised admiration of the king was wormwood and gall to Sir Walter, who took an opportunity to whisper a few words apart ere she retired.

"Remember my caution, Lady Eveline; for the king's devotion argueth no good to the fairest and most high-born of his subjects."

In a day or two we find her introduced at court, where her grace and beauty made a great sensation — the words of flattery pouring in upon her from all quarters. And now followed a succession of banquets, and other scenes of gayety common to courts; Eveline constantly attended by Sir Walter de Courtenay, one of the most admired and respected of gallant knights, as well as the most favored of the young lady's numerous admirers. She had not forgotten Sir Walter's hints concerning the king, and, although treating him with the dignity due his exalted rank, she most carefully avoided all occasions when she might be found alone by Cœur de Lion, whose admiration was open and undisguised,

but accompanied by a freedom especially offensive to so pure-minded a maiden as the Lady Eveline de Vere.

She had cautioned Winifred always to keep the door of her ante-chamber locked; but on one occasion, having passed out on an errand for the Lady Eveline, the latter had forgotten to turn the lock. Seated by a small table, she was completely engrossed by the contemplation of a miniature of Sir Walter, which she held in her hand, unconscious that the door slowly opened; but hearing a step, she raised her eyes to encounter the king, who boldly advanced, Eveline rising to her feet and stepping a few paces backward.

"We cry thee mercy, fair lady!" said the king; "and would not have thus intruded on thy privacy, an thou wert not to our person so coy and distant."

"Be seated, my liege," replied the lady; "but I hide it not that thou wouldst be more welcome an thou wert attended by Queen Eleanor."

The king drew a chair close to the lady.

"What aileth thee, fair maiden?" said the king. "Thou be gracious to all but to thy sovereign."

"I forget not, my liege, the distance atween monarch and subject; and to Eveline de Vere thou be Richard Plantagenet, King of England, naught more, naught less."

The king bit his lip; for under this expression of respect for royalty he felt that there was a rebuke that he dare not resent.

"This is our cause of complaint, fair Eveline. We would not be *only* and *always king;* for it is vain to hide the fact

that to thee we be adorer, and that syth the first hour that our royal eyes looked upon thee at Ravenscliff."

Eveline drew her chair away, and, rising to her feet, said with dignity:

"I cry thee mercy, my liege. This language becometh not a king addressing a subject."

"And why not, fair Eveline, an I love thee? Wouldst scorn Richard Plantagenet? Kings have their lady-loves as well as their subjects."

"The betrothed of Sir Walter de Courtenay listeneth not to words of love from aught in the kingdom, not even from the King of England. And now, my liege, I cry thee mercy, an I ask permission to retire from the royal presence."

With these words, bowing gracefully, Eveline, opening the door of her sleeping-room, left the discomfited suitor alone. From this period, there was no more enjoyment at court for the Lady Eveline; and the baron's business at an end, the party prepared for a return to Ravenscliff, Sir Walter, as the betrothed of the Lady Eveline, accompanying them on their journey, for he had been made acquainted with the story of the king's advances. Winifred was also of the party; for, attached already to the fair lady, she had asked the privilege of a permanent home at Ravenscliff.

By the side of Eveline's litter rode Sir Walter, the two engrossed by each other, saying those sweet nothings interesting only to the speakers. At home once more, Maude soon perceived that her fair sister had no time now for the

quiet studies of the turret; and we find her telling the story of her betrothal on the eve of her return.

"Dost remember, Maude, about the charm of St. Agnes's Eve? I tell thee, sister mine, that it was Sir Walter de Courtenay that gave me the flower in my dream."

The winter passed rapidly. It is now the eve before departure, and Maude is spending her last hours in her holy sanctum. Accustomed all her life to hear that a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is the highest act of piety, we therefore find the young devotee, with hands clasped and eyes raised to heaven, imploring protection in her long and weary pilgrimage. Though she has never heard the name of the doctrine so cherished by reformers, and so hated by papists in later years, she enjoys the peace, though she knows not the name, of the precious doctrine; for justification by faith lay deeply entombed in these mediæval days.

Maude dreams not of obtaining the absolution of her sins by this voluntary pilgrimage; but she loves the Lord and Saviour, and imagines that it is pleasing to her Master to rescue the land, that he hath sanctified by his presence, from the pollution of infidels. Therefore Maude asks his blessing on her journey, his smile upon her path.

Turning to take one last look at her little sanctum, she stands a moment at the casement, looking sadly at the red glory of the sunset disappearing below the tree-tops, wondering when she shall visit the dear spot again. Taking out her pencil, she records the day and hour when she closed its door, to enter no more, perhaps, for many weary years.

It is a sharp, clear morning, — the last matin service in the chapel, the last gathering around the family board ere the crusaders take up their march from England.

But little was eaten on that morning, for hearts were too full for appetite. In silence the sisters parted, and then the prioress laid her hand in blessing upon the consecrated heads of the females of the party.

"The blessing of the Holy Mother and all the saints be with you," said the solemn voice of the speaker; "and may our good Lord give success to the holy work."

"Be kind and watchful over my beloved Eveline," said the mother's trembling voice, and, giving her last kiss, she added: "Be of good cheer, my daughter. The Lord and all the saints be with us."

The Lady Eveline and Sir Walter stood aside to whisper their last parting words.

"This is a heavy weight of sorrow," said the weeper; "father, mother, brother, sister, and thou, too, Walter. Almost too much for a feeble woman's heart!"

"Keep heart, my sweet one," replied the young knight. "Time flies speedily. The blessed Virgin keepeth watch over us, and when our days of warfare be over we meet again."

"It may be years, Walter. It may be never."

"Harbor not such gloomy fears, my own Eveline. And now farewell."

Snatching one last embrace, the knight gave Eveline to the prioress, and turned hastily to join the cavalcade out of doors, while the ladies knelt to receive the blessing of the

priest. Father Ambrose stood at the entrance of the castle with the holy cross uplifted. Kissing the sacred symbol, the ladies once more bade farewell to the priest; and, turning to Cicely, the Lady Jaqueline said:

"Thou wilt be good to Father Ambrose, and see that all his wants be well supplied; and when our holy work is done, we hope to meet again; perchance it may not be here, but at the gates of the Urbs Beata."

The red cross on their shoulders, and in the pilgrim's garb, the two entered their litters, their ladies in waiting by their side; for Bertha Ducange and Gertrude Ellerton had also taken the cross.

It was a gallant company that marched out in long procession over the ballium of the castle; the few remaining at home stationed on the wall, and a long line beyond the drawbridge waiting to see the procession pass.

The Baron of Ravenscliff, in glittering armor, carrying his sword and lance, his battle-axe and mace hanging at his side, mounted on a splendid charger richly caparisoned, headed the procession, Sir Walter de Courtenay by his side. Knights in shining array followed: Sir Bryan de Bourg's massy form, bearing aloft the consecrated cross, Sir Amelot de Russy the banner of England, and Sir Hugh de Courcy that of Jerusalem, the gay plumes in their helmets dancing in the wind.

Then came the litters carrying the female pilgrims, and the wagons with their camp equipage, surrounded by brave knights, cheered by the spectators as they passed over the ballium. Next came the grand array of cavalry, gallantly

mounted on fine horses full of spirits, followed by the men-at-arms. The retinue thus passed out, all singing the inspiring hymn which they had been learning for this day.

Soldiers, raise your banners high;
Spread them to the starry sky;
Sound the warrior's battle-cry,
"It is the will of God!"

Sound the trumpets! beat the drum!
Bid the brave crusaders come;
Bid them leave the sweets of home.
"It is the will of God!"

Take the cross, and join the host;
Bravest he who leaves the most:
In the holy cross we boast,
"It is the will of God!"

Paynim hosts pollute the tomb:
Hasten on their day of doom!
To the rescue! soldiers, come!
"It is the will of God!"

See the cross beneath the feet,
Dragged and trampled in the street;
Haste the Moslem foe to meet.
"It is the will of God!"

Join the brave crusaders' train,
Haste to raise the cross again,
Though it be by thousands slain.
"It is the will of God!"

What though through a crimson flood,
Though thou wad'st through seas of blood,
Countless hosts that path have trod.
"It is the will of God!"

Rout the Moslem! cut them down!
Be a soldier of renown!
Then thou'lt wear a starry crown.
"It is the will of God!"

By St. George and all his host!
By the treasure we have lost!
Take the cross, nor count the cost.
"It is the will of God!"

The glittering armor and waving plumes, the splendid banners and richly caparisoned chargers, and most of all, the swelling chorus of manly voices, full of enthusiasm, singing the crusaders' battle-cry, imparted to the pageant an aspect of imposing grandeur such as had never before passed out of the ballium of Ravenscliff. The old warder raised the portcullis and dropped the drawbridge, the bright array passing gallantly over, the crusader's battle-cry "It is the will of God!" still sounding in the ears of the dwellers at the castle.

Eveline is folded in the arms of the prioress, listening to the chorus as, fainter and fainter, it came fraught with sadness, until, silenced at last, the shrill trumpets took up the stirring call to battle, and the two, with Cicely and Father Ambrose, stood listening in the same place until the final silence succeeding the exciting pageant left its heavy hand

upon the hearts that realized now, indeed, that the brave crusaders were on their way to the Holy City.

The young ladies who waited upon the Lady Jaqueline had all sought other places of refuge, some having entered convents, some having returned to their friends; all scattered save Bertha Ducange and Gertrude Ellerton, two of the gentry who had followed the fortunes of their lady.

Eveline returned to St. Agnes with the prioress, and the castle was left in charge of Sir Roger de Neuville, a brave knight, but too old to go on a crusade.

We will follow the long procession as it passes through the domains of Ravenscliff, very mingled emotions filling the hearts of the ladies.

Maude takes one last look at her little turret, which for a long time could be seen by the travellers, and when it disappeared, covering her face with her hands, she yielded for a moment, and wept silently at the possibility of seeing it no more.

We follow them to the place of embarkation, where a fleet is in waiting for many more on their way to the Holy Land; among the company the Baron of Hawksworth, whose jealousy is again aroused by the superiority, in numbers and equipments, of his rival's forces.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### WELCOME AT ACRE.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS and Richard having entered into a treaty to bury their private feuds for awhile, we find both monarchs making large donations to abbeys, churches, and monasteries, in order to bring down the blessing of Heaven upon their work.

They were both in the pride of youthful ambition, actuated more by a thirst for glory than by the religious spirit of the age. Interchanging passionate vows of friendship, which might be as easily broken, they agreed to unite their forces, and on the plain of Vezelay, in France, reviewed a gallant and well-equipped host of one hundred thousand men, all armed. Marching together as far as Lyons, they separated — Philip leading the French to embark at Genoa, where he hired vessels to carry them to Messina, the place of general rendezvous, which place he reached after having encountered a storm upon the voyage. Richard, in the meanwhile, proceeded to Marseilles, there to await his fleet; but with his usual impatience of delay, he remained but a week, and then hiring all the vessels that he could find, sailed for Genoa. In the Gulf of Salernum, the English

king was met by his fleet, and, anchoring before Messina, caused all the horns of his vast armament to blow as he entered the port. The excessive noise brought all the inhabitants to the walls, where they beheld the thousand banners of England covering the gulf with all the gay and splendid colors of chivalry. Richard was fond of such display, and perhaps so slight a thing as this first awoke that jealousy in the bosom of Philip Augustus which afterward proved so ruinous. Notwithstanding, the King of France had come down with Tancred, the usurping King of Sicily, who had much to fear from the anger of the hasty King of England. He had treated Richard's sister with great indignity, having imprisoned her. It is true that he freed her on Richard's arrival, but the king's first act was to demand the restitution of his sister's dowry; a demand met for some time with naught but quibbling and evasion. After a tedious voyage, the De Veres find themselves before the port of Messina, and the English, sharing their king's love of display, added their shouts of exultation to the blowing of the horns, and amid cries of "Long live King Richard!" the fleet entered the port.

Maude was anxious to land, for she knew who were on board of the king's galley; and being near enough to the royal vessel to distinguish forms, she was almost certain that Lancelot and Guy stood near the person of the king. Her anxiety was soon gratified; for on the moment of landing, the two young knights hastened to welcome their friends.

"Thou hast gathered roses on thy voyage, Maude," said

her brother; "for never saw I thee look so fair in the old castle."

"We have had a brave passage, only a few slight gales; and I trow that the sea-air hath done wonders in preparing us for our hot marches in Palestine."

Turning to Guy, she extended her hand.

"Thou lookedst not for to meet me as a pilgrim, Guy, when we clasped hands in the chapel; but when my good mother taketh the cross, that seemeth a call to me; for in the perils of war, what doeth the Lady Jaqueline without her daughter?"

"That holy symbol becometh thee, Maude," said the young knight, glancing at the cross upon her shoulder; "and I wis that the blessed saints take charge of thee all the voyage."

"Hast read the book, Guy, that I gave to thee?"

"Twice through, Maude. It is a wondrous picture of our Lord; and it seemeth that one studieth not the Gospel, without learning to love the Lord in a way that we wist not of before."

"Dost pray, Guy, that the word may dwell in thy heart? for, certes, it is the word, and not the sacraments, that maketh us free."

"That is not what Father Ambrose teacheth."

"Thou speakest truth, Guy; but an the good friar teacheth one thing, and the Lord himself teacheth another, it seemeth that we hold to the Lord's words, Guy."

"The friar teacheth that our Lord left his Church upon

earth with power to bind and loose, to make new laws an it pleaseth the priests."

"That is true, Guy; but meseemeth that priests taught by the Lord make no laws, and teach naught but our Lord's own Gospel which cometh from his own blessed lips."

"Thou art my teacher, Saint Maude," said the young knight, smiling in reply; "for I wot that thou leadest me not astray."

Taking a quiet part of the vessel, Guy led the Lady Maude to a seat near the bow, where beneath the bright expanse of a Mediteranean sky they communed together slightly of the past, but more of that rosy future that both hoped for.

"It is very pleasant to know that thou art so near, sweet one, in all that may befall us in the holy wars."

"So thought I, Guy, when leaving the dear old castle; but keep thou near thy Master, beloved. Dost love our Lord, Guy?"

"Not with such devotion as thou dost, Maude; but I pray for light."

"And he giveth thee what thou askest, Guy, an thou askest only in Jesus' name."

But they have left the vessel for accommodations on the land; and the baron, finding it probable that the fleet would not leave Messina very soon, placed his family in comfortable quarters, and we soon find them domesticated in the delicious climate of Sicily; Maude resuming her studies with Wilfred, and enjoying daily strolls in the charming neighborhood of Messina, the most delightful of her recrea-

tions being on the water, with no companion save Guy and the boatman, often laying down his oars to listen to the sweet harmony of their music.

Serious disturbances soon arose between Richard and Tancred, followed by dissensions between the Anglo-Normans and the Sicilians. Richard at length lost control of his hot temper, and fell upon the people who had come forth from Messina to be revenged upon the Normans for their excesses, stormed the walls of the city, and in a short time the banner of the King of England was flying over the capital of Sicily. This was a new drop of bitterness in the cup of Philip Augustus, and a coolness rose up between the two monarchs from that moment.

But the conduct of Richard was calm and moderate far beyond his usual habits. He offered to give up the guard of the city to either the Knights of the Temple or of St. John, until his claims upon Tancred had been fairly met. This quieted matters somewhat; but just about this time, Queen Eleanor, Richard's mother, arrived in Sicily, bringing with her the beautiful Berengaria, Princess of Navarre. Richard had been affianced to Alice, Philip's sister, but difficulties arising between the parties, Richard had long thought of breaking off an alliance that every day became more distasteful. The arrival of Berengaria decided him.

Having letters in his possession in which Philip promised to aid the Sicilians in case of a war with the English, Richard, with the papers in his hand, in full gallop rushed to the tent of the French monarch. Philip declared them forged, and that it was a mere pretence for breaking off the

marriage. High words passed between the angry monarchs, and it does not appear upon record how war was avoided; but the concessions were on the part of Philip, who renounced all pretensions to Richard's hand on behalf of his sister Alice, confirmed him in all the feoffs which he held from the crown of France, and, leaving him and Berengaria to conclude their marriage, set sail with his fleet for Acre.

The appearance of the French fleet before that place caused great joy among the Christians; for, notwithstanding the efforts on the part of the assailants, the city still held out; and girt in themselves by the army of Saladin, the scarcity was little less in their camp than in the town. For two years they had withstood the siege of the crusaders, who had never relaxed their efforts, using all the means that human ingenuity could invent to reduce the city.

It was plain now that nothing but assault by a large force could carry the fortress, and this the arrival of Philip seemed to promise.

But from some unknown cause of delay, the King of France waited for the arrival of Cœur de Lion, contenting himself with battering the walls in the meantime.

The coming of the King of France had spread much alarm among the Saracens; but his inactivity quieted their fears; and the escape of a magnificent white falcon which Philip had brought from Europe was considered by the infidels as an evil omen for the French monarch. The bird flew into the besieged city, and was thence sent to Saladin, who would not part with it, though Philip offered a thousand pieces of gold for his favorite falcon.

But to return awhile to Messina. Berengaria is there under the protection of Queen Eleanor, and we find the king seeking an early opportunity to make her acquainted with the ladies of the De Vere household. Lancelot and Guy are appointed to conduct the party into the presence of royalty. We find Queen Eleanor holding her court in a palace of the capital, surrounded by all the pomp that could be obtained in a hurried entrance, for a temporary sojourn. Led up a flight of marble steps, they are on the piazza of the palace, where servitors are in waiting to conduct them into the royal presence. Passing over the marble floors of the great vestibule, they are in the midst of fountains of cool water and vases of charming flowers, whose perfume fills the air. Onward through two or three antechambers, they find themselves in the presence of the royal party.

Queen Eleanor, of majestic presence, was a strong contrast to the almost girlish beauty of the queen-consort; for Berengaria was slight in figure, graced with a complexion unusual among her countrywomen, a profusion of fair hair, and features so juvenile, as to make her appear younger than she really was. Under the consciousness of this childish appearance, she practised petulant and wilful airs of manner, not unbefitting, as she thought, a youthful bride whose rank and age gave her a right to be humored and petted. Full of little graceful whims, sometimes choosing to be a little out of health, at others out of spirits, and they who waited on her capricious fancies were sometimes at their wits' end to know what to do next to please their wilful mistress. Just now she chose to be especially gracious;

for the quiet dignity and saintly beauty of the Lady Maude and the noble bearing of the Lady Jaqueline impressed the volatile lady with a consciousness that she was in the presence of superior persons; although the royal princess knew not that in the form of the gentle girl that stood before her there was one of a royal priesthood that should one day become "kings and priests unto God." After the ceremony of introduction, bidding the ladies to be seated, Berengaria addressed the Lady Maude.

"Takest thou the cross in sooth, fair lady?"

"In the Abbey of St. Hilary, the Lady Jaqueline and Maude de Vere took the cross that maketh us pilgrims; and I trow that no holier cause calleth us away from home and native land."

"Art tempted to turn back, Lady Maude?"

"Your Royal Highness forgetteth that we are under vows the most solemn, and to turn back, I trow, would be deadly sin."

"Thou seemest a holy saint. We take the cross, too; but there seemeth naught of the devout spirit in our vow, the glory of King Richard being our weighty concern in this crusade."

The interview between the ladies was short but pleasant, and several such hours of intercourse were passed together at Messina.

Richard remained some time in Sicily enjoying the idleness and luxury of a delicious climate and a fertile and beautiful land; in the fascinations of Berengaria's society almost forgetting his dreams of conquest. But various

celestial phenomena, which the superstition of the age attributed to Divine wrath, and the preaching of Joachim, a wild enthusiast, awoke him from his supineness, and after submitting to a humiliating penance, he set sail for Acre. The Baron of Hawksworth was on board of one of the galleys with his retinue, but deeply chagrined at the numbers and enthusiasm of those who followed his rival of Ravenscliff.

A tempest soon dispersed King Richard's fleet, and three vessels were lost upon the rocky shores of Cyprus. In the madness of insatiable greediness, the Emperor of Cyprus pillaged the crews and passengers of the English vessels stranded on the coast, and refused a refuge to the bride and sister of Richard himself, when driven by a storm into the port of Limisso at Rhodes. The lion-hearted king, getting his ships together, set sail for Limisso, and demanded reparation and apology. With more moderation than usual, he made the demand three times before proceeding to aggressive measures. Finding at length that satisfaction could only be obtained by the sword, he landed on the shore, and reduced the whole island to his sway. His wrath was now fully aroused; he taxed the unfortunate inhabitants of the country to an enormous extent; and then, after spending some time at Limisso, he celebrated his marriage with Berengaria, and once more set sail for Acre. The numbers of the land forces have not been recorded; but the magnitude of the whole armament may be conceived of when it is said that there were fifty galleys of

war, thirteen large store-vessels, and more than one hundred transports filled with horses and men. In a short time, Richard, with his fleet, sped rapidly on his way to the place of destination, having been detained by his caprices a period of eighteen months since his departure from England.

It were difficult to describe Maude's emotions as they sailed along the coast of the Mediterranean. The blue skies and delightful climate of Sicily had been charming to one so alive to the beauties of nature, but they were not invested with the halo of glory that sanctified every spot of Palestine in the chambers of her heart. They are almost in view of the Holy Land; the winds that come wafted to them from the shore are freighted with the perfume of sweet orange blossoms, and the sun is setting behind the distant hills that she is told belong to Palestine.

With clasped hands she sits gazing upon the shadowy outlines of those sacred hills, imagining Tabor and Calvary and Olivet; with heart-longings she strains her eyes in the direction of the Holy City, and sighs at the thought of the pollutions of the sacred places, but, most of all, at the desecration of the Holy Sepulchre.

In a short time, Richard, with his fleet, arrived before the city of Acre; and if Philip had been jealous at the *éclat* with which Cœur de Lion entered Messina, he must have been doubly so at the enthusiastic joy with which his rival was greeted. No doubt Richard's own proud heart beat with unholy joy at the shouts which welcomed his arrival.

The spectacle must have been magnificent, for all the proud chivalry of Europe were upon the sandy plain be-

tween Ptolemais and the mountains of Carouba: the Templars, the Hospitallers, the Knights of France, of England, of Germany, of Italy, Flanders, and of Burgundy.

Thousands of gorgeous banners floated on the wind; and all sorts of arms, device, and ensign glittered through the camp. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, for they were in Palestine.

The mounted cavalry on their spirited war-horses, the glittering armor, the plumed helmets, the martial music of the different nations playing the grand prelude of the crusaders' hymn, which, with a chorus of tens of thousands of manly voices, swelled out upon the air; no doubt reaching Saladin's camp, lying on the inland hills with all the imposing array of Eastern pomp and luxury. It was composed of millions; for Saladin had called out the pride of all the Saracens to meet the swarming invasion of the Christians.

Through that vast host were seen banners of green, black, and yellow, and armor of as many kinds and of as great magnificence as that of the Europeans. No sooner was the vast encampment fairly settled than the courtesies of chivalry were exchanged between the two great armies, who, in times of truce, mingled together in friendship, sending mutual presents to each other.

King Richard's tent was large and roomy; distinguished less by splendor than by the warlike spirit of the age. Weapons offensive and defensive were scattered about the pavilion, or disposed upon the pillars that supported it. Skins of animals slain in the chase were stretched upon the

ground or extended along the sides of the tent; and upon a heap of these spoils lay three wolf-hounds of the largest size, and as white as snow. On a small table close to the couch was placed a shield of wrought steel, of triangular form, bearing the three lions passant—first assumed by the chivalrous monarch; and before it the golden circlet, resembling much a ducal coronet, only higher in front than behind, which, with the purple velvet and embroidered tiara that lined it, formed the emblem of England's proud sovereign.

Beside it, as if prompt to defend the regal symbol, lay a mighty curtle-axe, which would have wearied the arm of any other than Cœur de Lion. In an outer partition of the pavilion waited the officers of the royal household, ready to attend their sovereign's bidding.

The only luxurious article seen in the monarch's tent was a small divan, richly covered with purple velvet and fringed with gold, evidently designed for the queen when visiting her royal husband.

Much more display was seen in the pavilion belonging to the queen. The doorway was formed by six lances, the staves of which were plated with silver, and the blades composed of the same precious metal. Pitched into the ground by couples, they were crossed at the top, so as to form a succession of arches, which were covered by a drapery of pale blue silk. Covered with an oriental carpet, the couch was such as became the youthful queen. Scattered around were small ottomans, richly covered, and such articles of taste as were indispensable to Berengaria. By the side of her couch

lay her favorite hound; and the adjoining apartment, separated only by a curtain, was occupied by her ladies in waiting.

The tents of the De Veres were near the royal pavilions, all under double guard at night. It was the first day of encampment, and feeling comparatively at rest, Maude drew aside the curtain of her tent, that she might enjoy the evening breeze after a hot and sultry day, such as she had never known in England. Her eyes were turned in the direction of Jerusalem, for her thoughts were there; and, taking her cithern, she sang with heart-felt expression St. Bernard's sweet hymn in its Latin melody:

"Jerusalem, the golden!
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed:
I know not, oh I know not
What social joys are there!
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare!

"They stand, those halls of Zion,
Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And all the martyr throng.
The Prince is ever in them;
The daylight is serene:
The pastures of the blessed
Are decked in glorious sheen.

"There is the throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast:
And they who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white!

"O sweet and blessed country!
Shall I ever see thy face?
O sweet and blessed country!
Shall I ever win thy grace?
I *have* the hope within me
To comfort and to bless!
Shall I ever win the prize itself?
O tell me, tell me yes!

"Exult, O dust and ashes,
The Lord shall be thy part;
His only, His forever
Thou shalt be and thou art."

We give the translation of the sweet old Latin hymn, conscious that it loses much of its melody in the attempt. The soft music stole out of the tent, drawing many a rude crusader to the neighborhood, where two or three reposing on the ground, and others leaning on their lances, lingered out of sight lest they should disturb the singer. The Lady Jaqueline entered the tent quietly and took her seat upon one of the ottomans; Gertrude Ellerton and Bertha Ducange occupying the others.

"We have had a weary voyage, mother mine," said the singer, laying down her cithern, "and this hour of evensong whispereth of rest; but I have that, good mother, sweeter than the loveliest, even the words of our Lord and Master."

Taking the manuscript from her pocket, she continued:

"Shall I read some of his blessed words here in his own land?"

"Thou mayest, Maude, an thou likest."

"Listen, good mother."

"'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'

"'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

"'Even the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

"'I will not leave you comfortless.'

"Seest thou, mother mine? The Lord saith: 'I will pray the Father.' He sayeth not that the saints pray for us, but the Lord himself."

"To whom speaketh the Lord these good words, Maude?"

"To his own disciples, good mother: but when he prayeth for them before he leaveth them, he saith: 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.'"

"Sayeth the Gospel so, Maude?"

"Certes doth it, good mother; and so it seemeth that these blessed words be written for Maude de Vere; for I trow that I am one that believeth on his name."

"There is nothing to fright us, Maude, in the words of that book."

"Naught but love, mother mine; and what else look we for from him that hangeth on the cross for us?"

Thus the two communed together until the evening twilight deepened — the heat of a sultry day cooled by the breeze that came wafted to them from the coast, and the fair moon shining down in her placid beauty upon the camp.

Maude continued looking at the crusaders slowly walking through the passages between the tents, some talking of the loved at home, some singing a solemn laud; and then, one by one vanishing from sight, drew the curtains of their tents around them — each, placing his huge cross-handled sword upright, and kneeling before it as the sign of salvation, told his rosary with a devotion enhanced by the consciousness that his orisons were performed upon holy ground.

It is all silent now; and Maude, fascinated by the impressive scene, is gazing at the vast city of white tents gleaming in the moonlight, the banner of England waving on the top of St. George's mount, where the whole camp could see this proud flaunting of superiority in the very face of Philip Augustus and Leopold of Austria. Naught is seen of living creatures but the sentinels; and Maude, with unusual fervor, commits herself and the cause she loves to the Saviour of her soul. Now the moon shines down upon a sleeping camp, disturbed only by the heralds calling, in startling tones, at stated hours: "Remember the Holy Sepulchre!" the crusaders' watchword, echoed from post to post by the sentinels throughout that vast city of white tents.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CAGED LION.

THE haughty King of England had no sooner settled in Palestine than the activity of his spirit infused new life into the crusade; but the contemptuous arrogance with which he treated the princes engaged in the same enterprise created enemies, and mutual jealousies took possession of the leaders. Those whom he chose to despise were his equals in rank, yet far inferior in courage, hardihood, and military talents.

Such dissensions, especially between Richard and Philip Augustus, threw serious obstacles in the way of every active measure proposed by the heroic, but impetuous Richard, while the ranks of the crusaders were much thinned, not only by the desertion of individuals, but whole bands were led off by their feudal leaders, who withdrew from a contest where they saw so little hope.

The climate, too, did its deadly work among the soldiers of the north, who, owing to the dissolute license which prevailed, became easy victims to disease contracted by burning heats and chilling dews.

The sword of the enemy, too, destroyed many; for Saladin, the greatest warrior in Eastern history, had learned that his

light-armed followers were not able to meet the iron-clad Franks; and he had been taught, moreover, to dread the daring character of Cœur de Lion. His armies had been more than once routed with great slaughter; but his numbers gave Saladin the advantage in lighter skirmishes. As Richard's army decreased, the Saracen's enterprises became more numerous and bold. The camp was surrounded, almost besieged, by swarms of light cavalry, like so many wasps,— easily crushed when once grasped, but furnished with wings to elude superior strength, and stings to inflict harm.

There were perpetual attacks of posts and foragers, in which many lives were lost, envoys interrupted, and communications frequently cut off.

The crusaders had to purchase the means of life by life itself, and water was often obtained only by the expenditure of blood.

But the stern resolution and restless activity of King Richard were equal to the emergency; and we find him with his best knights ever on horseback, ready to defend any post, often bringing unexpected succor to the Christians, and defeating the infidels when most secure of victory.

His favorite young knights, Lancelot de Vere and Guy de Mowbray, were ever with him in these skirmishes, and they had learned to look upon the courageous King of England as the bravest of brave knights, and he upon the young crusaders as aids to be relied upon in times of the greatest danger. But even the king's iron frame could not support without injury the trying climate and the constant exertion of body and mind.

He became afflicted with one of those slow and wasting fevers belonging to the East — at first unfit to ride on horseback, and then unable to attend the councils of war held by the leaders.

It were hard to say whether this inactivity were made more galling or more endurable to the English king by the resolution of the council to conclude a truce of thirty days with Saladin.

It was at the close of a hot Syrian day, when King Richard lay helpless on his couch, chafing under these reports of supineness that were brought day by day to him, much like an imprisoned lion seeing his prey from the iron bars of his cage.

The natural irritability of his temper preyed upon itself. Dreaded by his attendants, even medical assistants feared to exercise authority over the impatient monarch.

One faithful friend alone dare approach him at all times, and who exercised over him that degree of wholesome restraint so necessary for his recovery; for the Baron of Ravenscliff esteemed his sovereign's life and honor more than the favor with which he might regard him personally.

Cœur de Lion knew Reginald de Vere to be brave and loyal, fearing not even the king in the performance of his duty. We find him at this time seated by his royal master's side, at the close of this hot day; the king tossing from side to side — now clutching the coverings, now throwing them impatiently aside, his keen blue eye burning with fever, his features showing the wasting of disease, and his beard, neglected and untrimmed, had overgrown both lips and chin.

The baron had not laid aside his buff coat, which displayed the cross cut on the shoulder, for three nights, snatching only a few minutes' repose as the caprices of the king might allow.

De Vere was the only one who could persuade the monarch to take his medicines; and it was amusing sometimes to see how, like a wilful child, Richard would at last submit to his firm and kindly rule. The king was silent for a moment or two, and turning a keen eye upon his attendant, he said:

"What tidings from without, De Vere? Our knights compounding gruel and furmety? our ladies become devotees?"

"The truce, my liege, preventeth activity; and, for the ladies, they are waiting upon the queen to accomplish their vows for your majesty's deliverance from sickness, — a holy work, I trow."

"What delayeth Philip of France? and that dull porpoise, Leopold of Austria, and him of Montserrat? We know that a fever fit is on us; but what aileth them? A palsy hath seized upon them; not a spark of valor left in the camp. Give me my battle-axe, De Vere. Let me go."

And raising himself painfully upon his couch, he violently swung his arm over his head, as though wielding that instrument of war, his eye glaring with the excitement of fever. De Vere, exercising some force, obliged the monarch to lie down, saying:

"Be calm, my liege! Such violence only injureth thee and prejudiceth our cause without; for loud words are heard outside the tent and not always by loyal friends."

"But tell us, De Vere, why should Richard's illness check the march of thirty thousand men as brave as himself? Why chooseth not the council some one who will lead to action?"

"There are rumors that such councils have already been held?"

"Ha!" exclaimed the king. "Sayest thou so, De Vere? And whom would they appoint to lead the Christian host?"

"Rank pointeth to the King of France."

The king laughed in scornful derision.

"Philip of France and Navarre! his most Christian majesty! He might make sore mistakes; for Philip is more bent upon oppressing his feudatories and pillaging his allies than fighting for the Holy Sepulchre."

"There is the Archduke of Austria."

"Out upon him! I tell thee that Austria careth only for a flagon of Rhenish wine to drink with the herds of Dutch swine that herd around him!"

"What sayest your majesty to the gallant Marquis of Montserrat?"

"De Vere, thou trespassest beyond my patience. Montserrat the popinjay to lead the Christian hosts! He changeth his purpose as often as the trimmings of his doublet. He a brave man-at-arms, truly! A valorous knight is he, whose sword is blunted at point and edge, I trow!"

"I see how it is, my liege," replied De Vere. "We pray not at the Holy Sepulchre until heaven restoreth us King Richard."

The king laughed, evidently pleased, as he replied:

"Wouldst hear thy king's confession, De Vere? The Christian camp hath many a better knight than King Richard, and it were wise to place such over the host; but were such a knight to succeed in planting the cross upon the Holy Temple, an' Richard Plantagenet had no part in the task, he should have my challenge to mortal combat. Mark that, De Vere!"

Just then Sir Bryan de Bourg and the Archbishop of Tyre entered the pavilion.

"What meaneth thy fierce eye, my liege?" inquired the latter.

"Scanning the brave leaders of the Christian host," replied the king. "Not one of them ready to advance upon the fortress; building trenches and palisades to protect the camp, forsooth! as though afraid of an attack from Saladin, instead of marching straight on to the town as proud assailants."

"There lacketh the presence of King Richard," said the prelate. "But it hath been long since we have had a procession of the host through the camp. Perchance the holy presence inspireth the faithful with new zeal."

"Certes, and that is a bright thought!" said Sir Bryan. "An the holy father hath some miracle to tell, it would rouse the camp."

Next day, at the matin hour, the archbishop bearing the host, the bishops and priests in their richest vestments, with the holy cross, symbolic banners, and swinging incense, all chanting the Royal Banners, passed through the camp; the

king's tent thrown open, and the whole camp prostrating themselves in mute adoration as the host passed by.

Stopping at St. George's mount, the archbishop took his stand on an elevation that enabled him to overlook the camp, and in clear, loud tones, thus addressed the army:

"Soldiers of the holy cross! in the very presence of the Lord himself, I come to ask what meaneth the stupor that hath stolen over the camp? Who doubteth that the Lord is with us? As in the glorious days of the first crusade, so now, the saints are seen fighting for us; for last night, at the midnight hour, forms clothed in white, mounted on white horses, were seen by many fighting in the air over the camp. No doubt one was St. Peter himself, and one was the holy Saint Godfrey de Bouillon. Such visions have ever been seen before a victory; and now, when the leaders call to the warfare, let every valiant soldier be ready."

One universal shout went up from the camp, "God wills it! God wills it!" and amid the newly-kindled enthusiasm, the procession marched on, singing now the palmer's hymn.

A council of war met that evening in the tent of Philip Augustus, where there was a stormy debate. As soon as it was ascertained that Richard counselled immediate advance, the King of France held back simply to mortify his rival; and thus another opportunity was lost.

It was seen, however, that there must soon be activity, or farther departures from the army; and, without the knowledge of the English king, Philip made the attack, but was repulsed.

This independent conduct incensed the fiery lion of England, who, in his turn, ordered an advance, which was also unsuccessful. Necessity at length brought some degree of concord, and it was agreed that while one wing assailed the walls, the other should guard the camp. Still these efforts were ineffectual; for new causes of dissension sprang up daily, and portions of the army were called off to defend posts around the camp.

Rivalry became still more fierce; for Philip endeavored to seduce the vassals of Richard to enlist under his banner, as sovereign of their sovereign, by paying three gold pieces a month to each of the Norman knights who would join his standard; and Richard, in his turn, offered four, and many a French feudatory joined himself to the English king. Lancelot and Guy were devoted to Richard; and the former, anxious for his recovery, brought a Moorish physician of great renown to minister to his maladies. The king at first displayed not a little suspicion; but the persuasions of Berengaria overcame his reluctance, and we find him installed in the pavilion.

The physician felt his pulse for a long time, while all around stood silent. The sage next filled a cup with spring water, and dipped into it a small red purse which he took from his bosom.

When he thought it sufficiently medicated, he offered it to the king. Raising himself in bed, he drained the cup to the bottom, resigned it to the physician, and sank back upon the cushions which were arranged to receive him.

With silent but expressive signs, the physician motioned

that all should retire save himself and De Vere, who absolutely refused to withdraw.

Hours passed; the deep sleep undisturbed by a carousal given by the archduke to bystanders around his pavilion, which alarmed the whole camp with their uproar.

But the critical hour had arrived when the physician, according to the rules of his art, had said that the patient might be awakened with safety, and the sponge was applied for that purpose. The leech had not made many observations ere he assured De Vere that the fever had left him, and that such was the vigor of the monarch's constitution it would not be necessary to give a second dose. The king himself was of the same opinion, for, sitting up and rubbing his eyes, he inquired of De Vere what sum of money was in the royal coffers. The leech interrupted the reply by his own remark:

"I sell not the wisdom that Allah hath given me for gold, great prince; for the divine medicine would lose all its effect did I exchange its virtues for gold."

The queen had waited anxiously in the adjoining partition, and now, hearing sounds in the pavilion, she gently put aside the curtain and hastened to the couch.

"Art better, my liege?" inquired her majesty, at the same time taking the large hand within her delicate palm.

Passing his fingers caressingly through the light curls, he replied:

"The fever hath gone. The pulse is quiet as thine, Berengaria. Dost see any gleam of fire in the eye now?"

"None now, my liege, but what becometh Richard Plan-

tagenet; but methinketh that thy lion nature rouseth itself ere long."

Throwing his arm over his head, as though brandishing his battle-axe, he replied:

"Certes! there will be stirring in the camp anon an Richard be on his feet to rouse the sleepers."

"Words speaketh not our thanks, wise leech," said the queen, turning to the physician; "for the king seemeth himself again."

Making a profound obeisance, the leech replied:

"To Allah be all the praise, fair queen!" And putting aside the curtain, he left the pavilion.

Maude had frequently asked herself how she had fulfilled her mission in taking up the cross; for thus far she had been in a state of listless inactivity, greatly affected by the intense heat of the burning climate.

Outside of the camp, the Templars and Knights of St. John had charge of the hospital tents, generally full of the sick and wounded, for there were plenty of sufferers at all times throughout the siege. It had been estimated that during the German crusade no less than three hundred thousand had died, and an equal number among the Saracens.

Asking for a safe-conduct, Maude entered her litter, and bent her course toward these tents on the outskirts of the camp.

The Knights of St. John were much more useful and beloved than the Templars, who, though they made great professions of poverty and humility, were at this time one of

the richest as well as the most haughty of the European orders. One of the knights, in his long white robe, met Maude at the entrance, and, leading her forward into his own tent, pointed to a rude divan on the inside.

"Art come to do service for the Lord, fair lady?" inquired the knight.

"I took the cross, sir knight," was the reply, "not to waste my days in ease while the soldiers of the cross are in need of my poor service. Can I do aught for their comfort?"

"Thou shalt see speedily," was the reply, "an' thou followest me, fair lady."

Passing through wards where, on lowly beds, languished scores of wan sufferers, some in the anguish of recent wounds, others tossing with fever, all in need of woman's ministry, Maude saw her work.

At the extremity of one of the wards, her attention was attracted toward a lady, who, with noiseless step and gentle motions, was passing among the sufferers, followed at a distance by an attendant in Oriental garb. Tall and graceful, she was dressed in loose white robes, the under garment confined at the waist by a girdle clasped with an emerald set in gold. Her head and face were closely veiled, excepting now and then, as she stooped to speak words of kindness, the hand slightly threw it aside, disclosing a face of great beauty: so thought Maude, as she caught fitful glimpses of the lady. She seemed to be well known among the patients; for each face lit up with a sickly smile of welcome as she administered cool drinks and grate-

ful refreshment to the weary. Turning frequently into a small tent, she returned with her tray of delicacies, which she administered with her own tender hand.

"Canst tell me that lady's name, sir knight?" inquired Maude, pointing to the graceful figure.

The knight smiled, as he replied:

"Thou wilt start when I tell thee that that lady is a Jewess, one of the despised race; but, albeit, she is the most devoted of all that wait upon the sufferers."

Maude changed color; for she had been taught to despise the race that had crucified her Lord and Master.

"Pity that one so fair should belong to a race so foul!"

"Her name is Miriam, the daughter of Mordecai the Jew, a rich old man that liveth outside of Acre, in one of the bravest houses of this Eastern land. The daughter's kindness to the crusaders hath preserved house and home from outrage throughout the whole siege."

"How cometh it that she is welcomed by the crusaders, sir knight? Forsooth! methinketh it strange, very strange; for Jew and Saracen alike we look upon as mortal foes."

"She hath a woman's heart, fair lady, and a purse open at all times for the suffering, — Jew, Christian, or Saracen; but, most of all, it is a woman, weak and defenceless, that cometh to these rude soldiers, and the sword of a true knight defendeth such."

Just then the lady turned, and advanced toward the two, on her way out. Sir Joselyn bowed low as she passed by, and, looking at Maude with her eloquent dark eyes, the Jewess smiled upon the Norman lady, welcoming her to

labors of love, although she wore the crusader's cross upon her shoulder. Conducted by the Hospitaller still farther, he pointed out such as needed most care. But they are near the couch of an expiring soldier. By his side there stands a priest, holding the crucifix before his dying eyes, and Maude hears the tender words:

"Look at the Lord that died thereon, my son, not at the wooden cross," and kneeling by the couch, the priest added to the offices of the Church such a prayer as Maude had never heard from the lips of a priest of Rome. Rising, he took the pale hands between his own, and murmured:

"Farewell, my son. We meet at the gates of paradise."

Turning to another, his eyes fell upon Maude. The brow was fair and broad, the dark eyes serene and holy, and the smile with which he greeted the lady was one that could not easily be forgotten.

"Welcome, fair lady," said the priest, "to this holy mission; for weary sufferers need the gentle hand of woman. There are many sisters of the Holy Church among us; but thou wilt find thy work."

"Who is it, sir knight?" inquired Maude, as the priest passed in.

"Father Matthias," replied Sir Joselyn; "one of the holiest of the priests. Another St. Bernard, I trow."

This was Maude's first visit, but it was not her last; for her deepest sympathies were all awake for the lowly sufferers in the tents of the Hospitallers; nor could she forget the impression made by the one glance from the eyes of Miriam the Jewess, nor the saintly face of Father Matthias.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### MAUDE AND MIRIAM.

MAUDE'S deep acquaintance with the spirituality of the Gospel had brought her into real fellowship with the Lord Jesus; and we find her not only partaking of the free gift of redemption through his blood, but the genuine fruits of union with the Saviour appear in her daily life, purifying its inner fountain, dictating its words and actions; for in all ages, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Consequently, the romance of the crusader's lot is fading; and in the midst of a camp of rude and dissolute soldiers much reaches her pure ear that shocks her inner sense. Sensuality, impurity, blasphemy, cruelty, fill the air, — all abounding in the lives of those who are most rigid observers of the forms of Holy Church, worshippers of the blessed Virgin. Maude reads daily the records of that pure and spotless life as seen in the Gospel, and wonders how it is that his followers should be not only so impure, but the leaders so proud, so arrogant, so supremely worldly.

The crusader saw only the chief spirit of a great military order in the person of the Saviour of mankind, for whose glory he fought, thinking verily that thus they did the

Lord good service; but Maude saw the bright exemplar of all that was pure, holy and heavenly, whose kingdom was not of this world.

Fellowship with Jesus had filled the young heart with desires to do his will, and Maude could not imagine that a mere pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the gazing upon places sacred in the history of redemption, could comprise all of Christian duty; and so we find her daily rising from the contemplation of his blessed word with increasing desires to be like her Master, — lowly, loving, pure, holy, unselfish. She had caught the inspiration from the study of the blessed picture, being "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Daily we find her wending her way to the hospital, where the wan sufferers had learned to welcome her presence. Very sweet are the readings from her book, very soothing are her holy hymns.

There are many wards to visit, and sometimes it is days before she and Miriam meet in their holy work. But, to-day, Maude is seated by the side of a dying soldier, who turns his eyes upon the face of the young reader with beaming looks of gratitude and devotion. Miriam has been some time moving among her patients with her basket of pomegranates, and tarries awhile by the couch next to Maude, that she may hear the words that proceed from her lips.

In sweet, low tones she was reading the fourteenth chapter of St. John.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

"Hearest thou the Gospel, Sir Raymond? Jesus saith that he is the way. There is no need of saint or Holy Virgin to pray for us; for an there be, our Lord telleth us that in his Gospel; and there is not one word of such like in the holy book."

"Sinful men are we, Lady Maude. Meseemeth that we dare not come so nigh the Lord."

"Jesus knoweth it well, Sir Raymond. He hath done all the work of redemption for us."

"What must a dying sinner do, Lady Maude?"

"Let me read his own words, and then be thou thankful. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'Whosoever,' Sir Raymond. That is the Gospel. Thou believest, dost thou not?"

"I trust so;" and raising the crucifix that lay by his side, he murmured: "Thou who didst die for sinners, have mercy upon me."

"Shall I sing for thee, Sir Raymond?"

"Thou mayest, lady; for thy hymns come to me like the chants of angels."

"Jesu, name all names above;
Jesu, best and dearest;
Jesu, fount of perfect love,
Holiest, tenderest, nearest!
Jesu, source of grace completest;
Jesu truest, Jesu sweetest;

Jesu, well of power divine,
Make me, keep me, seal me Thine!

"Thou didst call the prodigal;
Thou didst pardon Mary;
Thou whose words can never fall,
Love can never vary.
Lord, amid my lost condition,
Give — for Thou canst give — contrition!
Thou canst pardon all my ill:
If Thou wilt, O say, 'I will!'

"Jesu, crowned with thorns for me,
Scourged for my transgression!
Witnessing through agony
That Thy good confession!
Jesu, clad in purple raiment,
For my evils making payment,
Let not all thy woe and pain,
Let not Calvary be in vain.

"When I reach Death's bitter sea,
And its waves roll higher,
Help the more forsaking me,
As the storm draws nigher.
Jesu, leave me not to languish,
Helpless, hopeless, full of anguish!
Tell me: 'Verily, I say,
Thou shalt be with me to-day.'"

Miriam listened to the holy hymn with deep earnestness; and when Maude laid down her cithern, she advanced, extending her hand.

"We must be no longer strangers, Lady Maude; for we are engaged in the same work of comforting the sorrowful and suffering."

Maude raised her eyes to the face of the Jewess, and saw naught there but tenderness and womanly feeling; and taking the offered hand, she replied:

"It pleaseth me much to know thee, fair lady; for I trow that we are in the midst of the sufferers of all nations."

Miriam smiled, as she replied:

"Then thou wouldst not ask, Lady Maude, whether Christian, Jew, or Saracen lie upon these couches."

"I trow not; for they are children of a common Father."

Seated now side by side, the two ministers of mercy — one of the Old, the other of the New Testament — communed together of the scenes through which both had passed, the Jewess offering her delicious fruit for Maude's patients.

Miriam glanced at the book in the hands of the Norman lady, remarking:

"Thou readest from thy book very good words, lady, an' they were only true."

"They are our Lord's own words."

"How knowest thou, lady?"

"The Holy Church hath taught us so. Thou believest in the Messiah, Miriam, dost thou not?"

"In one that is yet to come, lady, who will restore our ancient kingdom, and bring back our scattered people to their own land."

"Then what thinkest thou of Christ, fair Miriam?"

"I am not of those that despise thy Master, Lady Maude;

for our own rabbis say that there dwelt in Judea a long time syth a good man of pure and holy life, very benevolent and merciful, calling himself Jesus of Nazareth, and as such a good man, I honor him whom you call Master."

"Nor despise I thy people, Miriam, for our dear Lord was a Jew; and I trow that it were hard to forget that. But how cometh it, Miriam, that thou devotest thy time and money to those who despise thy people?"

"The God of our fathers was a God not only of justice and truth, but one of love and mercy; and I doubt not he acknowledgeth the work in this hospital as one that pleaseth him."

"Thou must learn to love our dear Lord as thine own Messiah, Miriam."

The young Jewess smiled, as she replied:

"That were a hard task for one brought up at the feet of the most learned of our rabbis; but we can love to do the same good work, only with a different faith, Lady Maude. But thou must come to our house; for I trow that life in a tent is not very comfortable."

"I came not for comfort, Miriam; for our Lord passed many weary days and nights in this land, hungry and thirsty,—for he had not where to lay his dear head; and the servant refuseth not to follow the footsteps of his Lord."

"But thou wilt come, Lady Maude. My father and Aunt Esther welcome thee for my sake."

"Just as my mother willeth, Miriam. It pleaseth me much to say yea to thy kindness."

Parting at the entrance of the hospital, each lady en-

tered her litter, mutually pleased with their short interview among the wounded.

Just as Maude was about to move off, Father Matthias stepped up to her side, saying:

"I heard thy reading, lady, to Sir Raymond. Whence didst get the blessed Gospel?"

"In the old castle of Ravenscliff, father, where I copied it from one lent me by Father Ambrose."

"Would that I might read thy copy, lady; for I have never seen the Gospel."

"Canst read our language, father?"

"I learned to read it in the monastery of St. Alban's, Lady Maude."

"Canst write, father?"

"An' thou lendest me thy book, daughter, I faithfully return the same."

"Thou art welcome, father. They are our Lord's dear words. They bring light and love to all who ask for guidance."

Handing her copy to the priest, she directed the bearers to move on; and Father Matthias said, on parting:

"Heaven bless thee, daughter!"

Maude had much to tell her mother on her return that day; especially anxious to visit Miriam the Jewess.

"What sayest thou, good mother, to such a visit?" said the young lady.

"Dost remember, Maude, that the Jews crucified our Lord? Meseemeth that we think of them only as enemies."

"But this fair Miriam hath no evil feelings toward our Lord; and who knoweth what cometh of such like visits, good mother?"

"Thou mayest go, Maude; for thou lookest pale and weary after thy labors in the hospital. Thou must not get sick, Maude."

In a day or two Miriam drew up to the tent of the De Veres in her litter, bent upon taking Maude back with her.

"I came before the day shineth hot upon us," said Miriam, apologizing for her early call, "and will return after the sun sinketh behind the hills."

The ladies of the tent were charmed with the graceful manners of the fair Jewess, and wished Maude a happy day.

Just outside of Acre, amidst a grove of palm-trees, we find the house of Mordecai the Jew, surrounded by every indication of great wealth. The house was built in Oriental style; the court-yard in the centre, with apartments surrounding. Maude was led through an entrance paved with fine marble, and filled with vases of charming flowers, into the chief apartment, separated from the vestibule by thin curtains suspended on gilt rings, where two attendants met them. Around this room, which was also paved with marble, were spread rich divans, and a few small tables elegantly inlaid with bright colors. Vases of flowers stood around; in the centre played a fountain of Damascene rose-water. Two attendants, in Eastern dress, with many-colored turbans, stood at the head of the room, with large fans in their hands. Raising another curtain, Maude was conducted into

a lady's apartment, to which was attached a bath and dressing-room. A young Jewish servant was here in waiting.

"Thou wilt wait upon this lady, Sarah," said Miriam, "and then conduct her to the room on the garden."

Miriam vanished; and following her guide, Maude enjoyed the luxury of a perfumed bath, the first that she had ever taken.

Her toilet accomplished, a glass of cool sherbet was handed on a silver waiter, and then conducted to the room appointed: Mordecai the Jew and his sister Esther gave her a cordial welcome. Miriam had changed her dress, and now appeared in one of the richest in her wardrobe. Her form was symmetry itself, shown to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress according to the fashion of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited the rich color of her olive complexion. Brilliant dark eyes, teeth white as pearl, and a profusion of sable tresses which fell upon a beautifully modelled neck, took Maude by surprise; for she had never seen one so brilliant as the lovely Jewess. Her vest was closed from the throat to the waist by golden and pearl-studded clasps, the three uppermost unfastened on account of the heat. A diamond necklace with pendants of inestimable value were by this means made conspicuous. Miriam of the hospital and Miriam at home were two very different persons.

The room opened on the garden, filled with the richest of Eastern plants and flowers, in the midst of which played a delicious fountain; and large fans suspended overhead *kept* the room delightfully cool. At a signal given, two

attendants entered with a tray of fruit and cakes, with sherbet cooled with snow from the mountains, one of the greatest luxuries of Eastern countries.

After the refreshment, music, in an adjoining room, entertained them for an hour; and then Miriam led her new friend into her own apartment, where heaps of embroidered cushions of the most luxurious kind were spread around the room. A dressing-room adjoining, and a number of pretty little articles scattered around, showed that neither pains nor expense had been spared in adorning Miriam's own room.

"It is an Eastern custom to rest in the middle of the day in these hot countries," said the Jewess; and inviting Maude to lay aside her tunic, she offered a thin dressing-gown, and the two composing themselves on the divans found the drowsiness of mid-day creeping over them, and were soon asleep.

Waking up, Maude perceived that her companion held a roll of parchment in her hand.

"What hast thou there, Miriam?" inquired her friend.

"Our ancient Scriptures," replied the Jewess.

"Wouldst read some, Miriam?" asked the Norman lady.

"I will try an I can make thee understand my poor attempt."

Opening at the first chapter of Genesis, she read·

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth," and so on, until she reached the passages where the plural pronoun was used.

"Stop, Miriam," said Maude, "those be strange words—

so much like those in St. John's Gospel," and repeating the words, the Jewess listened, more surprised than she chose to acknowledge.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

"Dost see, Miriam, that some other person besides God the Father is spoken of there; and then back in Genesis thou readest:

"'Let us make man.' Who can it be an' it be not the Lord Jesus?"

"It is a strange expression, Maude. I may not have read it aright. I will ask the rabbi. But let us read our sacred books together. What sayest thou?"

"It pleaseth me well, Miriam; for they are the words of God, I trow."

The pleasant day passed swiftly, and when the rays of the setting sun had disappeared behind the distant hills, Miriam took her new friend home to the camp, both promising that this should not be the last visit — Esther having joined her cordial invitation to the young lady, for Maude was one chosen by the idolized daughter of her beloved brother Mordecai.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### MOONLIGHT AMONG THE WOUNDED.

THE king has entirely recovered, and no supineness could hence be tolerated in the English camp. His enthusiasm spread rapidly among the soldiers: but the one great obstacle still remained; for the other princes, seeing his valor and determination, felt that the prize was most likely to fall into the hands of the English king, and neither Philip Augustus nor Leopold of Austria meant that he should have the glory. A fresh attack upon the walls is in contemplation; and, carrying forward the preparations vigorously, we find the army under Cœur de Lion himself advancing to the onset. The fury of the crusaders was at boiling heat, when they saw the image of the cross upon the walls pelted with dirt amid shouts of derision on the part of the jeering infidels.

Rushing forward, the lion-hearted king at their head, by a vigorous effort they carried the barbican and reached the wall. A portion of this was thrown down with axes and picks, and the king, followed by Sir Bryan de Bourg, the Baron of Ravenscliff, Lancelot, and Guy, mounting by ladders to the top of the battlements under a hail of arrows, fought for some time hand to hand with the Turks. But

after many had fallen on both sides, it became plain to the leaders that nothing could be effected without the usual machinery, and the assault was suspended.

Every power was now directed to the construction of the machinery necessary in a siege. Catapults, mangonels, and large movable towers were prepared, as in former sieges. During their fabrication, a dreadful drought pervaded the army. The wells in the neighborhood having been filled up by the Turks, the only water that reached the camp was paid for as if each drop were gold.

The soldiers, unable to procure it, wandered off in the search, or licked the morning dew from the stones. Vice and immorality stalked abroad, and superstition was obliged to be called in aid of virtue. Maude and Miriam were still devoted to the hospital, for in the late onset a large number had been added to the wounded. The engines were at length completed, and the attack once more began. The towers were rolled on to the walls, the battering-rams were plied incessantly, and while the Saracens poured forth both Greek fire and arrows, the crusaders waged the warfare with equal courage from their machines. The leaders of the Christian army, with King Richard at the head, occupied the higher stages of these towers, and, surrounded by the two De Veres and Guy de Mowbray, the king armed with a bow, directed his shafts against all who appeared upon the walls. Such soldiers as the machines could not contain were ranged opposite the walls, urging the battering-rams, plying the mangonels, and by flights of arrows covering the attack from the towers.

Immense efforts were made from all quarters, and the tower of King Richard rolled up until it touched the wall. The movable bridge was let down, and the king sprang upon the wall with battle-axe in hand, followed by Sir Bryan, the two De Veres, and Guy de Mowbray, who, covering the person of the king, fought hand to hand with the Saracens. The king performed incredible deeds of valor and strength, hurling one after another over the walls, until the Turks fell back before the giant warrior. The army beheld the Christians on the walls; but when reinforcements were most needed, none came. The gate was not burst open, Philip Augustus did not send aid, and the critical moment passed; for the Turks, pressing forward in multitudes, mounted the walls and repulsed the Christians. The fight was fiercest around the king, and the battle-cries of "Ha, Beauseant!" "For St. George and merry England!" were heard on every side. Some have fallen who pressed most closely around the king; and finding the day lost, the chafed lion retreated to the tower, and, rolling it away, raised the siege.

It were hard to describe the rage of King Richard.

"Where was Philip with his reinforcements?" said the king. "It needed but one more desperate charge, and the gates would have been opened. The false-hearted craven! And Austria, where was he? With his spruch-sprecher drinking his Tokay and Rhenish, I trow, and the gates just waiting for the army to enter."

Seeking the retirement of his pavilion, we find the queen hastening to meet him.

"Now heaven be lauded!" said the queen, throwing

her arms around his neck. "Thou art safe, my noble lion."

"Better to be with the brave knights that lie before the walls of Acre, Berengaria, than in this royal tent, a fallen, defeated leader of the Christian host; and all through the bad faith of France and Austria. Montserrat is scarcely to be named; for what look we for in a popinjay?"

Striding up and down the tent like a chafed lion, Richard seized his battle-axe, and, wielding it above his head, he said:

"Would that I dare cleave their skulls and scatter their brains, Berengaria. The vow of knighthood alone protecteth them."

"Thou art weary and sore vexed, my liege. Close the curtain around thee, shut out all comers, and let me unbuckle thy heavy armor. Thou must have rest; for I need none to tell what deeds of valor Richard Plantagenet hath wrought this day."

"Do as thou wilt, lady of our heart," said the king; "for thou speakest truth. Soothly we need rest."

With her own fair hands unbuckling his helmet and other heavy pieces of armor, she brought a short mantle, and with her soft blandishments persuaded the king to lie down upon his couch. Then bringing a composing draught, she administered it, and giving orders to his attendants to admit no one, she drew the curtains and left the tent. In the meanwhile, Maude was seated by her mother's couch, bathing her head and soothing the invalid by her gentle ministry, her heart

filled with the deepest anxiety for the fate of the besiegers; for, near enough to hear the din of warfare and the battle-cries of the crusaders, she felt as if every shout from the walls might be mingled with the dying groans of those she so dearly loved.

But the warfare for the day is ended, and, with a trembling heart, Maude is waiting for news. But there is a hurried step at the opening of the tent, and, pushing aside the curtain, Guy de Mowbray hurries forward.

Starting to her feet, and clasping both hands within her own, Maude hastened to meet him, exclaiming:

"Art safe, Guy? How I have watched for thee! Now the blessed Lord be lauded."

She could say no more; for, in the tumult of her joy, Maude had fainted, and Guy received the falling figure in his arms. A draught of cool water, with some sprinkled on the fair face, and a few words of tenderness, restored the maiden, and sitting on a divan, leaning her head upon Guy's shoulder, Maude spoke a few disjointed words; and then, as though suddenly awaking, she said, starting up:

"Is the day really lost? And where tarrieth Lancelot, my beloved brother? Do not tell me that harm hath befallen him. And my father, Guy; tell me of my father!"

"Thy father careth for the wounded, and I could not find thy brother, Maude. He fought bravely by the side of the king, amidst a shower of arrows. Many fell around us; but I saw nothing of Lancelot among the dead or wounded. There is hope that he hath been carried off the field by some one: we trust a friend. It hath been a dark day for the soldiers of

the cross, beloved. The king hath done deeds of wondrous courage; but the treacherous princes failed us. Hence our shameful defeat."

"Would that I knew something of my brother!"

"Grieve not, Maude. Thou wilt find him ere many hours, I trow."

After a long repose, the king awoke, refreshed and vigorous. Summoning a council of knights to his presence, we are in their midst.

Sir Bryan de Bourg, Sir Reginald de Vere, Sir Walter de Courtenay, Sir Guy de Mowbray, the Baron of Hawksworth, with some others, were present.

Discussing the defeat of the day, the king became greatly excited, and said with bitterness:

"Who doubteth the faithless spirit that failed us to-day? Philip careth for feudatory spoils, Austria for revels with his German boors, and he of Montserrat for the trimmings of his doublet; but thou, De Vere, deservest thy sovereign's reward. Brave among the bravest, loyal among the false, thou be worthy of the highest honors of knighthood. We dub thee now, Sir Reginald de Vere, in addition to thine other titles, 'Knight of the Golden Star,'" and the king, at these words, threw a broad crimson band across the shoulder of the knight, which was decorated with a large gilt star and the initials of Richard Plantagenet. Sir Bryan de Bourg and Sir Guy de Mowbray, with other knights, in their hearts approved of the distinction; but Sir Richard de Mowbray, with a sullen, envious spirit, listened to the monarch's praises, scowled darkly upon his rival, and left the tent.

"But where tarrieth Sir Lancelot de Vere?" inquired the king; "for, in the thickest of the fight, he was ever at our side."

"The last that was seen of him was in the midst of a shower of arrows, when many fell to rise no more," said Sir Guy. "I fear that he was one of the brave assailants."

"Lose no time in searching for him," said the king; "for, certes, England is the loser an' he be among the slain."

Guy obeyed the command, but returned with the intelligence that no tidings could be obtained of the brave young knight. It is evening now, and the placid moon is shining down upon the spot where the slaughter was greatest. Scattered around lay the wounded, the dying, and the dead; some crowded together in heaps, others alone in their anguish. A female form in white robes is walking slowly among the horrors of the battle-field, a male attendant by her side. She has been in such scenes before, an angel of mercy among the sufferers; and, as we glance at the face in the moonlight, we recognize Miriam the Jewess. She hears a groan, and, stooping down, sees a wounded knight lying helpless in his heavy armor, calling for water. They have brought some in the litter, for Miriam has seen the anguish of thirst. With the assistance of her attendant, raising the knight from the ground, unbuckling his casque, she administered the cool, refreshing draught.

"More! more!" murmured the parched and burning lips.

"Tell me thy name, sir knight," said the Jewess.

"Lancelot de Vere," was the faint reply.

"Place him in the litter, Reuben," said the lady. "We will take him to our own home. The hospital is no place for such; and we can do much for him in a quiet place."

Calling assistance from another who was searching for friends among the slain, he was placed in the litter; the loss of blood and the exertion of moving causing a deep faint. Removing the helmet, Miriam had a cordial at hand, which she administered, bathing the burning head with cool water. After a short time, there were symptoms of recovery; but the knight was bleeding profusely, and they hastened to the villa. By the time that they had reached the stopping-place, Lancelot was entirely insensible; and, hurrying him into an apartment where Reuben speedily removed his armor, another servant was despatched to the camp for a physician.

Esther and Miriam, being somewhat skilled in surgery, performed all that they knew of the steps necessary in such a case,—staunching the wounds, which were many, bathing the face in cool water, and employing an attendant to stand by with a fan; but the deep insensibility continued, and they were anxious for the arrival of the physician. But he is here at length, and pronounces the wounds serious but not mortal, although there were many. Fever followed returning insensibility, and Miriam was a faithful, devoted nurse. She has sent a messenger to Maude, thinking that it must be her brother; and we find the sister soon by the side of his couch, full of anxious solicitude, for Lancelot knows no one for days. His serving-man is with him; for

as soon as he heard of his master's injuries, he hastened to his side.

Maude spends much of her time with her wounded brother; but Wilfred, too, is wounded, and Maude is daily by his couch at the hospital. Wearied at length with anxiety and toil, and the prostrating power of the climate, she is obliged to seek repose; and now, added to her other cares, the Lady Jaqueline is ill with fever, and she is obliged to leave her brother in the hands of his faithful nurse, and the king's physician.

The crisis in Lancelot's case is safely passed, and we find him one morning, after a fever of nine days, awaking to consciousness, wondering where he is. He is reposing on a pile of cushions, his room opening on a garden, where flowers abound and where a delicious fountain is playing in his sight. There is a small table by his divan, on which are placed his medicines and cool water, a luxury enjoyed at great cost. His own man is sitting by him, ready to minister to his wants.

"Art there, Robin?" said the weak voice amid the cushions.

"The holy Virgin be lauded!" was the reply; "for we had lost all hope."

"Where am I, Robin? This is not our tent."

"Thou dwellest in the house of Mordecai the Jew, Sir Lancelot, and art nursed by his sister and daughter; but there hath been sorrow here since thou liest on that divan."

"What sorrow, good Robin?"

"The father fell in the siege, pierced by arrows, and burnt by the Greek fire!"

"What doeth a Jew in the Christian camp, Robin?"

"Methinketh from words dropped by Reuben, one of the serving-men, that Mordecai loved gold and treasure, and that he was searching for such like when the arrows overtook him; for they continued firing upon stragglers after the king had retired. His daughter Miriam was sorely grieved at the loss of her father; and, knowing that thou wouldst do the same, I went with Reuben to look for the dead Jew, for it was not safe for him to go alone."

"Didst find him, Robin?"

"We did, after long search, and brought his remains home to his daughter, who buried him, according to the Jewish ways, in a sepulchre out at the end of the garden, where the mother lieth."

"Thou didst well, Robin, and would that I could have helped thee in thy work."

At that moment the curtain was gently pushed aside, and a lady, young, lovely, and shrinking with modest diffidence, stepped into the room.

Clad in robes of the East, white, thin, and flowing, Miriam stood before the knight.

"Thou art better, sir knight. The God of Abraham be praised!"

"Where tarrieth my sister Maude, fair lady?"

"The Lady Maude is sorely grieved that she cannot be with thee; for thy mother, the Lady Jaqueline, lieth sick of fever, and the young esquire, Wilfred d'Arcy, is wounded,

and thy sister hath great toil in this land of the burning sun."

"Thou hast been a faithful nurse, fair lady; for Robin hath told how thou hast cared for a stranger when thine own heart breaketh with sorrow."

Miriam's dark eyes filled with tears, as she replied:

"Few have lost a father so good and kind; but I doubt not that he resteth in Abraham's bosom."

"Who hath been my physician, fair lady?"

"The king sent his own, Sir Lancelot, as soon as he heard of thy danger; but thou must not wear thyself out. Thou art weak yet, and needeth quiet, therefore I leave thee for the present."

"Thou wilt not stay away long, for thy voice cheers and comforts me like unto my sister Maude's."

Miriam, pushing aside the curtain, disappeared; and Lancelot lay thinking a long time of the fair vision that had just broken the silence of his room. Sinking soon into a healthful slumber, his dreams were of cool fountains, gentle breezes, and the whispers of a woman's musical voice.

The curtain is pushed aside again, and bearing a silver tray of refreshments, Miriam is here once more, with her own fingers paring the oranges, preparing the pomegranates, and pouring out the cool sherbet, thus tempting the capricious appetite of the languid invalid.

"Wilt look under the cushion, fair lady?" said the knight. "Thou wilt find a book there which is like cool water in a thirsty land."

Miriam brought out the manuscript of Maude's fair copying.

"Canst read our language, fair lady?"

"I can answer thee yea, for my good father spareth not his wealth in teaching his daughter, and a priest, who was sick in our house, taught me how to read the English tongue."

"Then thou readest the Gospel to me, fair lady."

"I would not deceive thee, sir knight. I believe not the Gospel; but if it pleaseth thee, I will read to thee from thy book."

"Find the fifth chapter, lady. Thou findest there that thine own Moses speaketh of our Lord."

In soft, silvery tones, Miriam read until she came unto the forty-sixth verse, and then read slowly:

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

"But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

"Seest thou not, fair lady, that Moses wrote of our Lord?" said Lancelot.

Miriam smiled incredulously, as she replied:

"But who writeth these words, sir knight?"

"Truly, the holy Apostle John."

"And seest thou not that he would make all appear according to his wishes?"

"But thou seest that these were the words of our dear Lord himself."

"So John believeth, sir knight."

Many an hour was passed thus during Lancelot's convalescence, and Miriam read her own Scriptures too, trying to make him understand her attempt at translation. Very fascinating was the close intercourse of the two in the luxurious repose of this Eastern villa, — Lancelot so shut in from the outer world, amid the perfume of flowers, the sweetness of music which came floating across the garden, from a room opposite to his own, and the daily visits of a young and charming woman, evidently interested in the wounded knight; and as for Miriam, she was in a new world, with no kindred on earth save Aunt Esther, so recently bereaved, a heart full of deep and tender feeling, the society of the gallant knight was full of danger for her future peace. There was a great charm in his accounts of Ravenscliff, with its romantic associations, its hawking and its tournament. Even the description of the bleak wintry season, with its roaring fires and its merry sports, had its fascination from its very novelty. She heard much of the Lady Eveline, of Father Ambrose, and good old Cicely, and hopes undefined and shadowy began to stir in the heart of the young Jewess.

We find the two, one day, out in the garden, Lancelot reclining on a divan, close to the music of the cool fountain, engrossed completely by the sweet interchange of harmonious thoughts.

"Dost seem long or short season syth we have known each other, fair Miriam," said the young knight, turning an admiring glance upon the blushing face beside him.

"Both, sir knight," was the low reply, as Miriam averted her face.

Lancelot smiled.

"So it seemeth to me short when measured on the dial of happiness, long in the crowding memories of hope and fear and deep emotion. Is that thy meaning, Miriam?"

"So thou sayest, Sir Lancelot?"

"The season of parting draweth nigh, Miriam, when I return to the duties and dangers of the camp and thou tarriest in thy quiet home. Wilt remember me, fair lady?"

"Friends are few to Miriam the Jewess; and thou knowest, Sir Lancelot, that these few weeks leave food for thought in lonely hours."

"In this secluded home, Miriam, I have seen thy noble heart, and could I hope for the place next to thy God, I could say farewell more willingly. Dost know, fair Miriam, that I love thee; thee only, thee fondly?"

Deep blushes suffused the maiden's cheek, as she replied in low, tremulous tones:

"These are blessed words, Sir Lancelot; for how could I bear to feel that the memories of these short weeks must all be blotted out?"

Taking the maiden's hand, and fixing an earnest gaze upon her face, Lancelot whispered:

"Say but one word, Miriam, and I am happy. Say but 'I love thee.'"

"Easy to say, Sir Lancelot, 'I love thee.' And shouldest thou have left the villa, and no words like unto these had passed atween us, I had buried the feeling in my heart, and

joined myself to a band of holy women, who spend their lives in deeds of mercy; but now," (and a bright, rosy smile passed over the face of the Jewess,) "when these cruel wars are over, I go with thee to England, to share thy fortunes and to cheer thy fireside."

"Heaven bless thee, Miriam! There is but one drawback to our happiness, and that is the difference of faith."

"I have told thee ever, Sir Lancelot, that I am open to conviction. I see the beauty of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth."

"Read me now, sweet one, a chapter of the Gospel."

In her own sweet, silvery voice, Miriam read the sacred record, her mind not yet ready to yield to the internal evidence of the divinity which she was beginning to see in its sacred teachings; admiring its holy, heavenly spirit, which was blessing Lancelot as much as herself in this sweet retirement. Seeing only, as yet, 'through a glass darkly,' we can leave the two with the Saviour's prayer:

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" remembering that not by sacraments are we born again, but "by the *word of God*, which abideth forever."

## CHAPTER XX.

### MAUDE LANGUISHES.

MAUDE is frequently brought into contact with Father Matthias, who has become deeply absorbed in the study of the Gospel.

One day, as she was about entering the hospital, the priest sought her side, and handing her the manuscript, said:

"There is thy blessed book, daughter. I thank thee for the good words; for I should have seen them never but for thee. I have a faithful copy which I keep unto my life's end."

"That be five copies, father, that proceed from the one lent by Father Ambrose."

"That were a blessed apostle, daughter, greatly honored by our dear Lord, spoken of as the one that Jesus loved."

The priest passed on, and Maude directed her steps to Wilfred's bed.

He had been looking long and wearily for her arrival, the morning hours dragging slowly on; and composing himself to sleep, he was just on the verge of forgetfulness, when a light footstep, that he knew so well, approached his couch. It was Maude, pale, weary, sick with watching, but with a small basket of fruit in her hand.

"Is it thou, Lady Maude? Where tarriest thou so long? I have watched the hours of this weary day until heart-sickness hath well-nigh closed mine eyes."

"I cry you mercy, good Wilfred, for weakness and weariness hath laid a heavy hand upon me; but I wot that thou spendest many lonesome hours, and I made much trial of my strength to see thee, for it may be that I be hindered ere long, from the fever that creepeth on."

"Say not so, Lady Maude. How could I bear the pain and weariness without thee?"

"I trow that thou art slowly mending, Wilfred; and when thou leavest the hospital, thou returnest these visits to thy couch. But I may not tarry long from the Lady Jaqueline, and have brought my book. Wouldst like to hear some of our dear Lord's words."

"Thou canst not please me more, Lady Maude."

"I will read some that suiteth thee well, Wilfred. 'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.'

"'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'

"'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'"

"Those are blessed words, Lady Maude. Dost think that they are meant for me?"

"Believest thou, Wilfred, simply like unto a little child?"

Clasping his thin hands, he looked upward, saying:

"Lord, thou knowest that I believe thy holy words."

"Then the Comforter cometh to thee, Wilfred, the Holy Ghost; and when thou art alone on thy couch, his presence will be with thee to teach thee all things; but I must go hence, and leave the blessed words of peace with thee."

"Couldst we choose our companions in the paradise above, I would ask no other among all the blessed saints than thee."

She has gone; and the rest of the day her place is by her mother's side, who needs her gentle ministry.

Lancelot is rapidly recovering, and the Scripture readings between the young Jewess and himself will not easily be forgotten. She is an intelligent, ingenuous reader, not concealing the questions which are beginning to arrange themselves in her mind concerning the Messiah; Lancelot often wishing that Maude were present to answer her inquiries. Entirely convalescent, the young knight is preparing to take his departure, deeply grateful for the kindness which has been extended by one of an opposing faith so generously to a crossed knight.

"Thou wilt be one of us, fair Miriam," said Sir Lancelot, "and then we be blest indeed."

"Once sure that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, all the rest is plain enough. I own to thee, sir knight, that there is much in the old prophets that disturbeth me of late, and that seemeth full of mystery."

"I shall sorely miss the cool fountains and sweet odors

of this quiet home, sweet one; but it was not for ease that we bound the cross upon our shoulders; and I hasten now to the side of my royal master, once more to take up arms against the infidels. And now farewell, my own Miriam. We meet again in brighter days."

No words passed the maiden's lips as in silence she received the last fond kiss of the young knight upon her fair forehead. Welcomed to the camp by the king, Lancelot is in his accustomed place of honor, awaiting active movements on the part of the army. Sick and weary with exposure to the hot suns and chilling dews of Palestine, Maude is unable to continue her ministry of love; and as soon as Miriam is aware of the fact, she is conducted to the villa, for the Jewess says that Maude cannot be properly nursed in the camp.

Maude is very ill; the fever daily on the increase, running its dangerous course of slow, insidious inroads of delirium and wasting of strength, until the deepest anxiety is felt by all who love her. In addition to her own, the Moorish physician is summoned, and on his first visit, Miriam reads deep solicitude upon his serious face, as he said in a low voice:

"I should have seen the patient sooner."

The Lady Jaqueline is too ill to leave her tent; Wilfred d'Arcy suffers and prays on his lonely couch in the hospital; the noble baron and Lancelot are daily visitors. And Guy de Mowbray is an object of the deepest sympathy, as he paces, hour after hour, up and down the garden paths, glancing hastily in at the open lattice of Maude's room, and

then wringing his hands in agony, returning to his lonely walk.

All are aware that a crisis is approaching. The physician, calling for a cup of spring water, takes from his bosom the small red purse, which he steeps for a few moments in the water. When sufficiently medicated, he administers it to the patient; and then motioning all from the room save Miriam, enjoins the most profound silence throughout the house, saying that twelve hours will decide the fate of the sufferer.

Father Matthias has heard of Maude's danger, and hastens to the villa, taking his seat out in the garden that he may comfort Guy in his deep sorrow. Miriam, fearing the noise of the footsteps, has brought out two pairs of soft slippers, saying the words:

"Perfect silence reigns everywhere by order of the physician."

The servants are not allowed to pass in that part of the house. The incoherent mutterings of the patient soon cease, and a deep death-like sleep is falling around Maude.

The physician is sitting motionless. Miriam's head is bent in silent prayer. Father Matthias, in low tones, is whispering words of entreaty for the sweet young life, while Guy is speechless with anguish.

One hour has passed.

On gentle footsteps Guy approaches the open lattice.

Can that be Maude de Vere? his own sweet Maude?

Motionless she lies stretched out upon the couch. Her mass of raven locks, clammy with death-sweats, is lying

around her shoulders, pushed back from a marble brow; for never, when shrouded for the grave, can she seem more cold, more pulseless, more death-like. Her wasted hands are lying upon the thin coverlet, with every mark of dissolution creeping over them.

Guy takes one despairing look, and then slowly returns to the priest.

"She is with the angels, father; and I shall see my sweet one no more. Gone — gone. Oh, Maude! how couldst thou leave me?"

The priest slowly walked to the lattice. Not one word was spoken; but a glance at the physician showed that hope was not dead there, although to Father Matthias there are no signs of life.

The hours rolled on. To Guy they seemed like time without a name, as with anxious gaze, from hour to hour, he looked in at the marble figure upon the couch, at the silent figures in attendance.

Not one crumb of food passed Guy's parched lips all the dreary day.

Six weary hours have dragged along, and the silent form has not moved once. Miriam motions to the physician. Her look is one of despair, and it is understood.

A faint smile passes over his face, as, standing by the couch, he places a small silver mirror before the mouth, and handing it to Miriam, she perceives the moisture. He lays his hand quietly upon the heart, and, raising his dark eyes to heaven, a look of hope is there. Placing his hand again

upon his mouth for continued silence, the Jewess understands the signal, and quietly glides out.

"What tidings, fair Miriam?" said Guy, in husky tones, as he saw her approaching.

"She is alive, Sir Guy; for I saw the moisture on the silver mirror which was held to her lips. Albeit the look is still like death, there is pulsation about the heart; for the look sent up to heaven, as the physician laid his hand there, was meant for thanks I trow."

Even this feeble hope was too much for Guy, for deep sobs burst from an overcharged heart, and the priest hurried him away, fearing that he might be heard. The noon passed by. The twilight was falling around the villa.

Guy is looking anxiously toward the open lattice. An unusual stir is there; for both Miriam and the physician are on their feet. Advancing to the couch, he said, slowly:

"It is the time for waking the sleeper," and applying a sponge to the face, slowly the dark eyes opened; one long, deep sigh, and now another; the hands moved gently, and a soft smile played around the mouth, as, peering into the distance, the gaze of the dark eyes became more intense, more intelligent, and the lips whispered faintly:

"Guy, art there, my own?"

"Can I call him?" said Miriam, eagerly.

"Thou canst; but have thou some refreshment immediately, in small quantities, such as I order."

Miriam beckoned from the lattice, and Guy hastened to obey the summons. Stretching forth her wasted hands, a smile of pure and tender sweetness passed over Maude's face,

and the eyes rested with a look of holy love upon Guy's bowed form, as, unable to stand, he took a seat near the couch. Taking his hand between her little palms, she said, in slow, dreamy tones:

"Thou hast been full of sorrow, Guy; and I, beloved, have been in paradise. I have seen the shining ones in the heavenly city; have heard their harpings like unto the sound of many waters; and I have seen the Lord."

"But thou art with us yet, fair saint," said Guy, "and heaven be lauded! Art grieved, Maude, to come back to earth once more?"

"An' it is the Lord's will, I have naught to say; but it was blessed to be with Jesus."

"Be quiet now, sweet one; for thou mayst weary thyself."

Miriam now took her seat by the side of the couch, administering refreshment at regular intervals, and, by orders from the physician, shutting out all other visitors for the remainder of the night.

There was great joy next day at the villa; for many hearts were bound up in the life of Maude de Vere. She could scarcely be persuaded that she had not really been in paradise, and seemed so grieved when told that she had only been dreaming, that at length Father Matthias said:

"Let the sweet saint enjoy her vision. It cannot harm her."

And so Maude repeated in her own artless way the story of her visit to the heavenly city.

Very soon she is made acquainted with the nature of the

tie that binds her brother to the lovely Jewess, and Maude is more anxious than ever that she should become a Christian. She is wan and wasted, and the tender care of her young nurse is what she needs. She is in an apartment next to Miriam, and the quiet sanctuary of the Eastern villa imparts its healing balm day by day to the invalid. She has brought her precious book, and we find the two frequently comparing their Scriptures.

Maude's thin hand, almost transparent in its frailty, is lying on the cushions which support the invalid, when Miriam enters to-day. Taking it between her own, the Jewess pressed a warm kiss upon its whiteness, saying:

"This little hand hath worn itself out, methinks, in its deeds of mercy, and must not work again until it is rose-tinted and plump once more."

Seating herself, Miriam is reading from the prophet Isaiah; the Hebrew very clear to herself, but has much difficulty in making Maude comprehend her efforts at translation.

She is reading the fifty-third chapter slowly, as if in a questioning tone, the words, "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we esteemed him not."

"Whom, Maude, meaneth the prophet?"

"Read farther, Miriam."

"'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.'

"'Brought as a lamb to the slaughter, he was taken from

prison and from judgment, and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.' Who can it be? Isaiah speaks, and he is a Jew. He speaks of this person as wounded for us."

"Seest thou not, dear Miriam, an exact description of what the Gospel telleth of our Lord? I knew not that such like words were found in the prophets."

"The religion of our fathers teacheth us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Can it be that the lamb slain by the high-priest was but a shadow of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world? Oh! Maude, an' it be so, what have we done? Crucified our Lord!"

"Let me read to thee from the Gospel, Miriam;" and in sweet, low tones Maude read portions from the interview of Thomas with the Lord, while, with head bowed upon her hands, Miriam listened.

"'Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.'

"'And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.'

"'Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'"

Miriam raised her fine, dark eyes, and, clasping Maude's hand within her own, she said, in tones of deep feeling:

"My Lord and my God!"

"Now God be lauded for his goodness!" said Maude, tears of joy streaming over her face.

The word had come with power to the heart of the Jewess, and the last fortress of unbelief had fallen.

"Not only the prophets, dear Lady Maude, have torn away the veil, the Gospel itself beareth on its face its own divinity. We find in our Scriptures God in majesty, power, truth, and holiness; but here he cometh in the might of his boundless love."

Father Matthias is frequently by the side of Maude's couch of languishing. His visits are so consoling, so different from the other priests that wait upon the camp.

He has embraced with his whole heart the Lord Jesus as revealed in the holy Gospel, and the Spirit of the Master has taken possession of his whole nature; one of those saintly ones who even in the dark ages had learned to hate sin, to love holiness, to reflect around him the image of his Lord.

But we turn our steps awhile to the condition of the tedious siege of Acre. Another foe is knocking at the gates; for, having held out for many months, the city was now cut off from all supplies. The city could resist no longer; and, after a short truce, which was asked in hope of assistance from Egypt, it surrendered to the monarchs of England and France on very rigorous terms. It was a scene of great humiliation to the haughty Saracen. The curtains of King Richard's tent were thrown aside, and the proud monarch, in his knightly armor, stood by the side of the King of France, surrounded by distinguished knights and churchmen,— the Archbishop of Tyre bearing the cross, Sir Bryan de Bourg, in his Templar's white robe, bearing the banner of England, and Sir Jacques d'Avesnes that of

France,—the pavilion being filled with knights in armor. Before the tent was the defeated Saladin, bowing in deep obeisance before the lion-hearted king, his emirs and other distinguished officers kneeling on the ground.

Saladin was to restore the wood of the true cross, which he had taken at Jerusalem, release fifteen hundred chosen Christian captives, deliver up Acre, and ransom the garrison by paying two hundred thousand pieces of gold; the monarchs of England and France agreeing to spare the lives of all the Mussulmans in the place. On these terms, the city was surrendered and the cross planted on its ruined walls.

The garrison and inhabitants, with the exception of some thousand hostages, were allowed to depart, and the Sultan immediately broke up the camp. But Saladin failed in all particulars, whether from unfaithfulness or inability is not stated. The ransom was not paid, the cross not restored; and with the fanatical ferocity of a crusader, Richard cruelly commanded the five thousand prisoners to be slaughtered in cold blood, the king boasting of the massacre as an acceptable act in the sight of heaven.

Maude in her pavilion had heard the fearful order, and rushing into the presence of the king, she threw herself at his feet, the haughty monarch regarding her with stern astonishment.

"O most noble king!" exclaimed the maiden, with clasped hands, and eyes fixed imploringly on his face, "have mercy upon the prisoners! They have done nothing; helpless, hopeless, they are in your powerful hands."

The queen, hearing the commotion, had also entered the tent, and threw herself by the side of Maude, joining her entreaties to the pleader.

"Tut! tut! they are only Paynim dogs and miscreants, and deserve to die the death of brutes."

"Say not so, my gracious liege," continued Maude, tears raining down her face. "They are husbands, fathers, sons, brothers. Think of the anguish, the bitter wails of those who love them, and, for the sake of Him who died for us, have mercy! Spare their lives!"

"They die by the laws of the crusaders," replied the king. "Take her away, Berengaria. Thy pleading is in vain. They die."

The queen, raising the weeping suppliant, placed her arm around her waist, supporting Maude's drooping head upon her shoulder, and thus led her forth. Raising her head for a moment, she had one glimpse of the five thousand marching out of Acre to the place of slaughter, surrounded by a strong guard and preceded by their cruel executioners.

Falling with a heavy weight upon the queen, one of her ladies hastened out to help her mistress, and, conducting their burden into her own pavilion, they laid her gently upon the couch, applying restoratives to the fainting girl. It had been a terrible shock to Maude, and for days a deep silence fell around her, broken at length by a visit from Father Matthias.

"What aileth thee, daughter?" inquired the priest, who found Maude reclining on cushions at the opening of her tent, with hands clasped before her.

"The massacre, father, passeth before me day and night. I hear the cries, I see the flashing swords. Can this indeed be a holy war, which inciteth the followers of our Lord to deeds so bloody? Doth our loving Master smile upon such work, or are we indeed, father, all deluded?"

"I wonder not that thou feelest thus, daughter, for the same vision hath visited me ever syth the horrible day. When I read the Gospel of him whom Jesus loved, it seemeth to contain not one word of such cruel murder; and yet Godfrey de Bouillon, of sainted memory, at the capture of Jerusalem, is said to have committed deeds as dark as this, with his own sword aiding in the massacre of men, women, and even innocent children; and then, washing his hands of the blood, and exchanging his armor for a white linen tunic, with head and feet bare, he repaired in deep humility to the Church of the Sepulchre to confess his sins, and to pay his vows of thanksgiving for the victory; this wholesale murder not reckoned among his transgressions, I trow."

"It cannot be the pure religion of our Lord that maketh men so cruel," replied Maude; "and with the Gospel of peace open in our hands, what think we of the crusades?"

"An' the people had always read the blessed Gospel, daughter, we should soon see no crusades upon the earth."

"I am so weary, father; it seemeth all so unlike what I dreamed of at Ravenscliff;—the blasphemy and drunkenness of the German soldiers, the tumult of the camp, pitching the bar, throwing the ball, wrestling, roaring of songs, clattering of wine-pots, and quaffing of flagons; the king himself

ready to join the noisy revels when the humor seizeth him. I tell thee, holy father, that I long for my quiet turret."

"And I, daughter, for the peace of the cell in the holy monastery."

The sultan was not slow to revenge the massacre of the hostages, and on both sides repeated butcheries darkened the hatred of the combatants.

After the surrender, new jealousies arose between the rival princes; for, after the capture of the city, the Archduke of Austria boldly placed his banner on one of the towers; but no sooner was Richard aware of the daring act, than with his own hand, in a storm of passion, he tore it down, rent it in pieces, and trampled it under his feet. The insult was neither forgotten nor unavenged, though from that moment the banners of the kings only floated from the walls of Acre.

Thus arose new dissensions; and the two monarchs, by taking possession of the whole spoil, dividing it between themselves, gave high disgust to the rest of the crusaders.

Soon after this, the crusade received its death-blow by the desertion of Philip Augustus. It is true that his health was seriously affected; but there is little doubt that the overbearing conduct of Richard, and his jealousy of the great superiority of his rival in a military point of view, was the real cause. Philip was an able general, a brave knight; but Richard was the wonder of his day; and what Philip might have admired in an inferior, could not be tolerated in a fellow-king. As bound to Richard by a treaty, his permission

to retire was asked by the king of France. At first, Richard exclaimed with a burst of indignation: "Eternal shame on him and all France, if for any cause he leave the work unfinished!" but added afterward: "Well, let him go an' his health require it, for he can't live without seeing Paris."

With this surly leave, Philip hastened his departure, having sworn in the most solemn manner to respect Richard's possessions in Europe; an oath which he soon found occasion to break.

The Duke of Burgundy, with ten thousand men, was left to support Richard, whose next work was to repair the fortifications of Acre, to purify the churches, and to restore the Christian religion.

Maude hails the latter with great joy, for it has been many months since her feet had been inside of a Christian church.

The Moorish physician has been summoned once more, for the queen has been attacked by fever; and, employing his skill in behalf of the Lady Jaqueline also, he is equally successful as in the case of the king, with the exception of the weakness that still hung about them.

Miriam's steps forward in the Christian life are firm and decided; for the one great fact settled in her mind, obedience follows. There is to be a grand Te Deum in the principal church of Acre; and, joining the procession of the ecclesiastics, we find the ladies of the crusade in their litters hastening to return thanks in public for the victory. Miriam is with the party, anxious to receive baptism at the hands

of the Archbishop of Tyre, Father Matthias assisting in the ceremony.

The music and all the accompaniments of Romish worship seemed to impress Miriam, whose ideas of the ancient pomp of the Jewish ritual rendered this acceptable; though it was but a faint picture of the grandeur of the old ritual, when the Shekinah rested between the cherubim, and when, alone with God in the Holy of Holies, the high-priest offered up the sacrifice.

"Sisters now in the Christian faith," said Maude, as they took their seats in the litter which bore them back to the camp.

"I lose nothing of the faith of my fathers, Maude," said the convert. "I only believe more, for the old Scriptures are just as sacred; but new light is dawning upon them, when through the ceremonies of our ancient church, and throughout the prophets now, I see Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. I love my people just the same, Maude, and look forward to the coming of our Lord to restore our ancient glory, when he shall reign upon the throne of our father David, and the days of our mourning and dispersion shall be ended."

With locked hands, they talked of Miriam's new hopes, saddened much by the fear of speedy separation, for there were stirring indications of a change in the position of the Christian forces ere many days.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ASCALON.

PHILIP is gone; and Richard is able still to muster thirty thousand warriors, and is contemplating a change of base.

Maude and Lancelot are paying their farewell visit to Miriam. Many tears are shed by the two at the thought of meeting perhaps no more on this side of paradise. Lancelot is deeply moved, for there is a bond of sacred union between the young knight and the lovely Jewess.

"Wilt wear this, Maude, for my sake?" said Miriam, suspending a small pendant of precious stones by a gold chain around her neck.

"What exchange can I make for such a gift, Miriam?"

"One thou couldst, that I would esteem of more value than all the precious gems within my casket — just one copy of the blessed Gospel."

Maude took her treasure from her pocket.

"I have but one, Miriam; would that I could copy it for thee; but, Lancelot, an' thou leavest thine with Miriam, I will copy thee another when we reach Ravenscliff once more."

"It is thine, Miriam," said the knight; "and the blessing of heaven go with it."

"It will be my guide, Maude, through all my pilgrimage until I reach the new Jerusalem."

One more tender farewell, and the three separate — Miriam to find some new and holy work now that the camp is about to move, and Lancelot and Maude to accompany the crusaders. Late in August the army was ready for departure; but on the evening before, a midnight mass was held at Acre for the souls of those who had fallen in battle.

Early on the following morning they struck their tents, and commenced their march in a southerly direction upon Jaffa toward the sea-coast. Richard displayed great skill in the discipline with which he conducted this march.

Nearest the coast, in communication with the English fleet, marched the camp-train and its followers; the army itself in five divisions, the Templars in the van, the Hospitallers in the rear, archers and other light-armed foot-soldiers on the left or outward flank, to check with their missiles the galling onsets of the Turkish cavalry.

By day, clouds of these horsemen hovered around the front, flank, and rear of the Christians, harassing them with continued assaults; by night, Saladin encamped in their neighborhood, and broke the repose of the wearied soldiery with frequent alarms. But the unshaken valor of the crusaders exhausted all the arts of Asiatic warfare. Litters containing the ladies of the crusade were in the centre, all under a strong guard. At sunset the army regularly halted. During the night the loud voices of the heralds thrice broke the deep silence of the camp with the cry: "Remember the

Holy Sepulchre!" rousing the slumbering sentinels of the host to watchfulness and prayer.

It is the close of one of those hot, oppressive days so often felt in Palestine, and Maude is faint and weary. Gertrude Ellerton is supporting the sinking pilgrim, when Father Matthias rides up to the side of the latter.

"Cheer up, my daughter," said the priest, as he looked at the languid eyes turned toward the voice; "we are half way on our march. This glare of heated sand daunteth stouter hearts than thine, I trow."

"I am not frighted, father; but I was thinking of the cool shades in our own dear land, and the walks in the pleasance of Ravenscliff, in the sweet spring-time, when the tender buds put forth their young shoots, and of the soft summer winds, when the breeze so gently stirreth the green leaves; sometimes my heart fainteth with home-sickness."

"Patience, daughter! Think of the pilgrims of sacred memory, who took their lives in their hands and encountered all this, and much more, for the love of our dear Lord, who died for them and us. Here we have hunger and thirst, scorn and mocking: so had our dear Lord. Here evil beasts devour; but there no lion disturbeth their peace. Here are hills of sand and burning drought; but there is the river of life. Here the fever and the plague wasteth; but there sickness and death cannot enter. Like true soldiers of the cross, setting their eyes upon the heavenly country, they went onward, and, by the tender mercy of God and the intercession of the blessed saints, their sorrows are all forgotten, their tears all wiped away."

"Talk thus to me, father. Thou almost makest me forget the sorrows of the way."

"Think, my daughter, too, of Him who suffered when He was here on earth. If we be parched with hunger and thirst, so was He; if we be scorned by the Paynim, so was He; if we be without a home, He had not where to lay His head; if we take our lives in our hand, He did much more for us."

But the sun is sinking lower and lower, and the army is halting for the night. Leaving the litters, the ladies are seated under a small grove of palm-trees, watching the golden haze of this sunset hour. The western breeze is rising, and the eastern hill-country of Judea shines with a deep purple brightness for a short time; the clear west was in a blaze of glory, when the sun dipping suddenly behind the hills, darkness for a short time followed, — the after-light of a tropical country stealing on in its silent beauty. The west, that had begun to die away into a gray tint, blushed out in reviving pink, distant hills assumed a more living purple, the distant murmur of the palm-grove came sweeter, the breeze sighed more gently, and one bright evening star peeped forth in the heavens.

"How lovely!" said Maude, as she drank in the beauty of the landscape, and felt the reviving influence of the western breeze.

The vesper aves have been said, and the hour of compline stealeth on. Bowing their heads and telling their rosaries, the party under the palm-trees recite seven Pater-nosters; the most devout among the crusaders reciting daily fifty-seven in all.

Maude closed her eyes in silence, and in her own way repeated her evening prayer.

"Seemeth it not very strange, mother mine," said Maude, "that the Church teacheth us to count our prayers, — thirteen at matins, nine at vespers, and seven at compline? It seemeth laid out just for a weary task, when the heart that loveth to pray goeth out at all times, just like unto the vapor rising on dewy wings to descend upon us again in gentle blessing, — heavenward, earthward, — until the last taketh us up above the region of prayer to that of holy lauds in the paradise above."

The morning of the sixteenth day dawned beautifully clear, a few fleecy clouds sped across the sky, casting the shadows on hill and dale, filling the earth, air, and sky with a dazy brightness, that a foreign tongue calls the *rosicler* of a summer day. The Archbishop of Tyre felt that a conflict was near. Already the cry of the muezzins had been heard calling to prayer.

"To prayer! to prayer! God is the one God!
To prayer! to prayer! Time is flying!
To prayer! to prayer! Judgment is drawing nigh to you."

The bishop, clad in complete armor, bearing the true cross, ascended a mount, and addressed the army as far as his loud and powerful voice could be heard.

"Barons and knights," he said, "men-at-arms that are children of this land, pilgrims that have come from the far ends of the earth to do homage to Christ's dear love, you are soon to meet his great enemy and ours. Our numbers

are smaller to an earthly eye than theirs; but could our eyes be purged to behold the world of unseen things, we should see an innumerable multitude fighting for us. It may be that Godfrey de Bouillon, of sacred memory, shall do more wondrous deeds to-day than when he scaled the walls of the Holy City, and that the saints who laid down their lives for the Holy Cross are already out in battle-array to fight for us in our day of need. But, above all, we have the unconquered cross of our Saviour Christ that conquered the Persians. How shall it not do valiantly against the Saracens? And doubt not that albeit the voices of Saint Peter and Saint Bernard are hushed in death, their spirits are active in our behalf. Doubt not that they are present with us, putting courage into our hearts and strength into our arms. Do we our part, and they will not fail us. Knights of the Temple, lances of St. John of Jerusalem, the stay and prop of Christ's Church in this land, let the field of Ascalon be as famous as the capture of the Holy City."

Thus spake the prelate, and the Christian host shouted: "It is the will of God! For St. George and merry England."

In expectation of the battle, the tents of the ladies were pitched on the borders of the camp, under a strong guard. It was not long ere the brazen kettle-drum of the sultan sounded the attack, and the whole infidel host, with the Saracen war-cry shrieking in their ears, was suddenly precipitated in one tremendous charge upon the Christian array. So rapid and furious was the onset, so superior in numbers, and so overwhelming the force and weight of the shock, that the small squadrons of the crusaders, enclosed

within their own infantry, were for a time crushed together on all sides by the pressure.

Galled by the Turkish arrows, the chivalry impatiently demanded permission to extricate themselves by a charge.

"Lead us on, gallant lion heart! lead us on against those Paynim dogs!"

But the fiery Plantagenet alone remained calm and collected, watching, with dauntless eye, until the Saracens had exhausted their arrows.

"Stand firm, brave knights, deliverance cometh!" called out the king. Then suddenly brandishing his battle-axe, he shouted in tones of thunder:

"On Burgundy! On D'Avesnes!" and dealing his powerful blows right and left, he let loose the cavalry upon the Saracens in one terrific charge. A cloud of dust far on to the right, shrieks from the infidels, and shouts of "Cæsarea!" told that the lances were doing havoc among the enemy.

"Charge! charge! Ha, Beauseant!" still shouted the fiery king.

Lancelot and Guy were gallantly defending the holy cross in the hands of the archbishop; Sir Bryan de Bourg and Sir Hugh de Courcy bravely defending the two knights, who were sore beset.

"The cross's weight in silver," shouted Assoread-el-Kargel, "to the man that shall first seize it! Its weight in gold to him that shall keep it!"

The bishop was sorely pressed, placing his back against a fragment of a wall, with both hands grasping the cross.

Terrific was the conflict now, for a Saracen had succeeded in wresting it from the bishop's hands; but Guy, with tremendous efforts, defended by knights and men-at-arms, while the cross swayed to and fro in the struggle, obtained the sacred wood once more, and many a brave man-at-arms fell around him, with eyes fixed upon the cross as they closed in death.

Once more the cross is wavering; once more it is in the hands of a Saracen, who, hand to hand, is struggling with Sir Guy.

"The holy cross is in danger!" shouted the bishop, who, with his battle-axe, was cleaving on all sides.

At that moment, the king dashed forward, dealing blows which sent terror into the hearts of the Saracens. With the fearful cry: "Ha! Beauseant! Fight for the holy cross!" he made one stupendous charge, which sent the whole infidel host flying to the hills before the mighty conqueror, unable to resist the steel-clad squadrons of the crusaders.

But there is a deed of darkness in another part of the field of Ascalon, where the Baron of Hawksworth, seeing his rival in an unprotected situation, with the malignity of a fiend, rushed upon De Vere.

"Thy time hath come, miscreant!" shouted de Mowbray. "Said I not that I would meet thee yet in mortal combat?"

"Hast forgotten thy knightly vow, De Mowbray — sworn never to strike one whose shoulder beareth the cross?"

But the faithless knight was dead to honor and truth, and, rushing upon De Vere, attacked him with relentless fury. He would have brought him down to the ground,

were it not for the timely succor of a dozen men-at-arms, who, seeing the dastard knight, set upon him with sword and lance, and soon the Baron of Hawksworth lay weltering in his blood.

The day is with the lion-hearted king. So sanguinary were the charge and the pursuit that above twenty emirs and seven thousand of the flower of the Turkish cavalry were slain upon the battle-field; and Richard boasted that, in forty campaigns, the sultan had never sustained so severe a defeat as this at Ascalon.

The feats that he performed on that memorable field were almost incredible; but certain it is that his voice, his eye, his look, brought inspiration to the Christians and dismay to the Moslem host.

Richard had to mourn the loss of a few of his knights; but, among these brave men, none were more lamented than the heroic Sir Jacques d'Avesnes and the gallant Templar Sir Bryan de Bourg. The king found the former dead, the latter mortally wounded. Too far gone to be removed, he desired his brethren in arms to kneel around him, while he received the offices of the Church at the hands of the archbishop. He lay upon the ground, the king and Sir Hugh de Courcy supporting him.

"God's will be done!" said Sir Bryan. "This is to die as I have ever wished, — knightly and Christianly; and I do well believe that by the intercession of our Lady of Deliverance, whom I have served, that my pains will be short and my joys long. I pray you to forgive me, all that are here,

— for methinks it waxeth dark, — wherein I have offended any. Sir Amelot, take my capuchon to remember me by. I commend myself to your prayers, brethren in arms."

The archbishop began the commendation of the soul, while all the knights knelt around, and ere it was finished, the soul of the brave knight had departed.

In another part of the field knelt Sir Guy de Mowbray by the side of his dying father. He had confessed, and obtained absolution at the hands of the priest. Scarcely able to articulate, he whispered:

"Lay me at Hawksworth, Guy; and may the Lord have mercy on my sinful soul!" With these words the knight departed; Guy mourning in deep humiliation over a parent who had so transgressed not only the laws of chivalry, but those of God.

Without further hindrance from the Saracens, the army now pursued their triumphant march to Jaffa, taking possession of that city, Cæsarea, and other dismantled castles in the neighborhood.

Richard desired at once to march upon Jerusalem; but was prevented by the opposition of the French barons, who insisted upon the necessity of rebuilding the fortifications of Jaffa. On their arrival at Jaffa, the funeral of the knights who fell in battle took place; the king denying the same honors to the remains of the Knight of Hawksworth, who had so tarnished his knightly name. Sir Jacques d'Avesnes was one of the most distinguished of French knights, as Sir Bryan de Bourg was of the English; and several others distinguished for valor having fallen, the

king was determined to bury them with the highest military pomp of these days. For each knight there was an official present, who wore the armor of the defunct, mounted on his horse in full trappings, carrying the banner, shield, and helmet of the deceased, the point of the battle-axe downward, a token like a reversed torch of death. Six horses thus mounted entered the church at Jaffa, bells tolling, and solemn rolls of music filling the building. Then came the Archbishop of Tyre in his pontifical robes, bearing aloft the sacred cross, followed by the priests in their vestments, who preceded the coffins borne by knights and covered with black velvet palls richly decorated with silver fringe. The Mass for the dead was performed with solemn pomp; and although the Baron of Hawksworth was refused the honors of representation in this procession, his name was remembered in the service of the Mass.

For two months the army remained at Jaffa, restoring the works, before the crusaders again moved forward toward Jerusalem, reaching Ramula, within a short distance of the Holy City. Here the inclemency of the season, want of provisions, and sickness arrested their march, and Richard began to grow hopeless.

The army, therefore, fell back to the coast, and the winter was spent by the soldiers in repairing the walls, and by the leaders in treacherous intrigues and dissensions. But toward the spring, Richard so far succeeded in restoring unanimity as to gather all the forces under his standard, and at their head marched again toward Jerusalem. The general enthusiasm was enkindled by hope of success; the chieftains and

soldiers joining in a solemn oath that they would not quit Palestine until the sepulchre of Christ should be redeemed. But they are steadily on the march now; and, encamping one night on the borders of the valley of Hebron, they are aware of their near approach to Jerusalem.

The thoughts of near proximity to the Holy City banished sleep from their eyelids, and soon after midnight was well-nigh passed, the host were all awake, watching for the dawn of day. It was a lovely morning in the spring-time; and, waiting for some time in silence, the sun rushed suddenly into the sky with the glory of an Eastern dawn, and Jerusalem lay before their eyes.

The remembrance of all that had happened in that mighty city, the enthusiasm of faith, the dangers through which they had passed, the ills, the weariness, the sickness, the toils that they had conquered, the end of fear,—the bright fulfilment of hope awoke in every bosom the sublime of joy.

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" was echoed by a thousand voices, as the sun flooded the domes and minarets of the mosques in one flame of glory. Some shouted to the sky, some knelt and prayed, some wept in silence, and some, in transport, kissed the sacred earth.

Father Matthias is on his knees in deep devotion; the archbishop, bearing aloft the cross, strikes up the hymn Urbs Beata, and soon the whole camp joined in the volume of sacred music. The arrival of the host so near to Jerusalem alarmed the Saracens. Numbers fled from the Holy City, and even Saladin himself despaired of preserving his proudest conquest with such a conqueror at the gates as Cœur de Lion.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM.

WHEN the Saracens were most alarmed, Saladin was suddenly relieved by the unexpected departure of the crusaders. Many reasons have been given for this unaccountable caprice. The best attested accounts, however, attribute the abandonment to Richard himself. A variety of reasons may have influenced the act, — the treasonable defection of Burgundy and his French followers, the news from England of the dangerous intrigues of his brother John, and a secret consciousness that the resources of the crusaders were now unequal to the capture of the city; but it is vain to speculate. Suffice it to say that when its walls were in his view, Richard proposed a council, selected from among the barons and chiefs of the Orders, to decide, upon oath, if it were preferable to engage in the siege of the Holy City, or to make a diversion against Damascus or Cairo. To the general disappointment, the council decided against the siege; and Richard, amid the discontent of the whole army, commenced a second retreat to the sea-coast. Whatever may have been his motives, he felt keenly the shame of his failure; for when led to a height from which he might take a last view of Jerusalem, he hid his face in his shield, exclaiming:

"Wretched king! he who is unable to rescue is unworthy to look upon the Holy Sepulchre."

Finding that Richard had continued his march from Jaffa to Acre, Saladin poured down from the hills with his troops on the former city, assaulting it so unexpectedly that many of the Christian garrison were slain in the streets, and the remainder only saved their lives by shutting themselves within some of the towers. They had already been reduced to sue for a capitulation, when Richard suddenly arrived at the port to succor.

He had prepared to set sail for England; but, fired with indignation when he heard that Saladin had renewed the offensive while his foot was still in Palestine, he threw himself into a galley, and, followed only by a few knights and archers in six other vessels, sailed for Jaffa, leaving his army to retrace their march after him along the coast. When his small squadron reached the shore, finding that the garrison still held out, with his shield around his neck and his Danish axe in his hand, he plunged into the sea. Inspired by his heroism, his attendants quickly followed; Lancelot and Guy close upon his footsteps. The Moslems were so dismayed by the fury of his attack, that they fled before this handful of assailants, and abandoned Jaffa to its deliverers.

Richard had with him but fifty-five knights, — ten only mounted, — and two thousand foot-soldiers. He displayed his contempt for the infidels by encamping without the gates; and in this situation, on the second day of his arrival, the Turkish cavalry, recovering from their surprise and finding

the smallness of his force, renewed the attack in overwhelming numbers.

He not only sustained their charges, but rushed into the thickest of their squadrons at the head of his ten knights, everywhere carrying death and confusion into their ranks. Whole squadrons fled before him. Never had he done such deeds of valor and strength. When Saladin saw his troops flying, he is said to have asked:

"Where is the King of England?"

"There, sire, upon that hillock with his men."

"What!" cried the sultan. "The king on foot among his servants! This is not as it should be," and Saladin sent him a horse, charging the messenger to say that "such a man ought not to remain on foot in so great danger."

Night put an end to the unequal conflict; but so hopeless now was Saladin, that he raised the siege of Jaffa without any farther attempt.

This was the last and most brilliant achievement of the lion-hearted king on the shores of Palestine, and with it ended the third crusade. His violent exertions had brought on a return of fever; and Saladin himself was wearied with fruitless hostilities and laboring under a bodily decline, which in a few months laid him in the grave.

Richard consented to dismantle the fortifications of Ascalon; and the sultan, on his part, agreed to leave the Christians in possession of Tyre, Acre, and Jaffa, with the maritime territory between the first and last of these cities, to abstain from attacking the territories of Antioch and the

Count of Tripoli, and to grant all Christian pilgrims free access to the holy places of Jerusalem. On these terms the two monarchs concluded a truce between the nations of their respective faith for three years and three months; and Richard prepared to bid a last adieu to the scene of his glory. We will follow him to his tent on the evening after these events.

"Thus endeth our dream of glory, Berengaria," said the king. "We are needed in England more than in Palestine, an' all that reacheth us be true; for our treacherous brother soweth dissensions in our realm."

"Now that the way is open," replied the queen, "we would join the pilgrims that march to Jerusalem; for thousands will go to worship at the holy places."

"An' we could go with thee, fair queen, it would be well; but the defeated leader of the third crusade looketh not upon the sacred spot that he could not conquer; and thou returnest to England speedily with our sister Joan."

"Without thee, my liege?" throwing her arms around his neck.

"We follow with the army, Berengaria; and we be not parted long season."

Maude is weary and heart-sick of bloodshed, strife, and wickedness, longing for the quiet of England, but unwilling to leave Palestine without the long-desired visit to Jerusalem. She is talking with her brother Lancelot, at the close of this eventful day.

"What thinkest thou, good brother?" said the young lady. "Would our Miriam join us in our pilgrimage?"

"Doubtless such would be her desire. I will send a guard for her. Jerusalem is doubly sacred to her, as a Jewess and a Christian, Maude."

Without delay we find Miriam, in pilgrim garb, among the crusaders.

When the first joyful greetings were over, Miriam, holding Maude in her arms, said, anxiously:

"Thou lookest pale and weary, Maude. What aileth thee?"

Smiling languidly, she replied:

"So weary of burning sands and chilling dews, of bloodshed and strife and sorrows; longing for the quiet turret and my blessed Gospel, longing for the cool fields of my native land."

Berengaria and her court are preparing to sail for England. The king is at Acre, making preparations to follow; but ere he left, he bestowed upon Lancelot and Guy especial marks of the royal favor, by conferring upon each the order of the Golden Star.

The pilgrims have purchased the palmer's garb at Jaffa, and a large company of knights, peasants, and persons of all grades in life, join the procession; the ladies and invalids in litters. Outside of the Holy City, the company dismount, and, barefoot, prepare for their march.

The archbishop, bearing the holy cross, barefoot like the rest, headed the procession, the clergy following after. Then came the throng of knights and men-at-arms and ladies all on foot, save Maude, the Lady Jaqueline, and Wilfred

d'Arcy, too weak to walk far. Entering the first gate, the whole multitude sung the palmer's hymn:

"Holy city, happy city,
Built on Christ, and sure as He;
From my weary journeying,
From the wastes I cry to thee;
Longing, sighing, hasting, crying,
Till within thy walls I be.
Ah! what happy, happy greeting
For the guests thy gates who see!
Ah! what blessed, blessed meeting
Have thy citizens in thee!
Ah! those glittering walls how fair,—
Jasper sheen and ruby blee.
Never harm, nor sin, nor danger,
Thee can tarnish, crystal sea!
Never woe, nor pain, nor sorrow,
Thee can enter, city free!"

We follow them as they pass the Via Dolorosa. Immediately beneath the window where the *Ecce Homo* was pronounced, the archbishop intoned the *Deus Meus, Deus Meus* — a thousand voices taking up the Gregorian chant; and with slow, solemn step the procession moved on, the Saracen population looking on without jeering, for Saladin had kept his promise of allowing none to disturb the Christians on pilgrimage. Now they paused at the Church of Our Lady of Grief; the spot where our Lord, bending under his cross, was met by his blessed mother. Then arose the Stabat Mater, echoing over Mount Moriah on one side and Mount Calvary on the other. They passed the place where Simon

the Cyrenian bore the cross; and there they began the seven psalms with the litanies.

And so they passed on by the house of Lazarus, by the spot where our Saviour said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me," by the dwelling of Saint Veronica, by the judicial gate; and so they began the ascent of Calvary, chanting the *Miserere*, and then continued their march to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

It were hard to describe the highly-wrought emotions of the Lady Maude, as, bathed in tears, she stood by the empty tomb; solemn funeral dirges chanted by the priests in the chapel in the meanwhile.

Taking up their march outward, to allow the crowds waiting outside to enter, Maude and Miriam asked to be led to the places sacred to the Jews; and, standing in silence on the site where the temple once reared its glorious walls, Miriam broke the stillness by saying:

"'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!

"'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee.

"'Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces.

"'The Lord shall build up Zion,' and 'He shall sit upon the throne of his father David,' for thus saith the prophet Isaiah: 'The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his saints gloriously.'"

"When, dear Miriam?" whispered Maude, looking upon the rapt countenance of the Jewish Christian with feelings of solemn awe.

"At his coming, Maude; when our people will return to the Holy Land, and the days of our mourning will be ended."

"They will be Christians then, Miriam."

"Yes, and Christ shall be among us, as the king so long promised, — Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

This visit of the crusaders was attended with no expressions of contempt excepting from a few isolated individuals, such as are found in every community, mocking the fallen. The Bishop of Salisbury was entertained in the sultan's own palace, and obtained from the generous Saracen leave to establish three societies of Latin priests in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem, and in Nazareth. Various were the splendid acts of kingly magnanimity which closed Saladin's communication with the crusaders.

On the 25th of October, 1192, Richard sailed for Europe. The fruits of this crusade were small; but in his own person he had acquired a degree of military glory that none in future ages could wrest from him. He had many failings; his own arrogance, as much as the jealousy of his rivals, tending to create disunion and frustrate his object. But he had many noble qualities, and carried the heart of a lion to his grave.

After encountering a violent storm, which scattered his fleet and wrecked most of his vessels, Richard, in a single ship, touched at Lara, where he landed, accompanied only by two priests and a few knights of the Temple, whose garb he had assumed.

From Lara, he endeavored to make his way through Ger-

many in disguise; but in vain. The news of his journey had already spread; and the unforgiving Archduke of Austria, whose banner he had trampled under his feet, caused every road to be watched. One after another of his companions was dismissed by the king, until at length, with a single squire, he arrived at a small town near Vienna, where, taking his abode at a petty lodging, Richard sent out his squire for provisions. Recognized by some of the archduke's spies, Richard was taken and cast into prison.

The royal captive was soon given into the hands of the Emperor of Austria, who concerted with Philip Augustus the means of detaining him in secrecy. His confinement, nevertheless, was soon known in England, and in Palestine also. No sooner did Lancelot hear the news, than he resolved to set out in search of his master; and we find him, therefore, in the pavilion, seeking an interview with the Jewess.

"I come to say farewell, my own fair Miriam, but hope soon to meet again. I go to rescue my beloved master, and return not until I discover the place of his confinement, for I am solemnly bounden to his service. But there is a seat for thee, Miriam, by the fireside of Ravenscliff; for I have spoken to the baron and the Lady Jaqueline, who will welcome thee to England. But canst thou go with all thy heart, Miriam? One word is quite enow, and that be 'come.'"

Turning to the young knight a face beaming with emotion, she laid her hand within his open palm, saying solemnly:

"'Come!' for with Ruth of ancient memory, Miriam sayeth:

"'For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

"'Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.'"

Taking leave of his friends, Lancelot has gone, and Maude is overjoyed at the thought that the fair Jewess, whom she has learned to love so well, is indeed to be her sister, to dwell with her at Ravenscliff.

We will follow the young knight on his journey, having met with Blondel de Nasle, a favorite minstrel, who, in company with Lancelot, visits all the old castles on the Danube around which there seemed to be any mystery.

For a long time their search was in vain; but we find them at length, at the close of a winter day, in sight of an old fortress around which was thrown a great air of mystery.

A peasant was seen standing on this side of the moat, looking up at a small window, where there was evidently a hand moving aside the casement.

"What seest thou, my good man?" inquired Lancelot.

"A man's hand, I trow; an' thou waitest a moment, thou hearest some good music, for he playeth on some sweet instrument every evening at this hour."

Just then a plaintive air came wafted to them on the evening breeze.

Blondel took his harp, and played a familiar air. The

musician in the turret ceased, and then answered it; following with one still more familiar. They betrayed nothing in the presence of the peasant; but after he had gone, Blondel turned to his companion, and said: "It is the king, our beloved master! Would that we could see him! But the window is too high and too distant to recognize a face."

"I trow that we have certain knowledge now," replied Lancelot. "Let us hasten to make it known."

The place of the king's confinement was soon known. Knightly honor and religious feeling were invoked, and the infamy of detaining a traveller — a pilgrim and a crusader — was proclaimed with the powerful voice of a people's indignation. Henry at length felt himself obliged to yield some appearance of justice for detaining an independent monarch; and Richard was brought before the diet at Worms, charged with imaginary crimes, the chief of which was the assassination of Conrad, Marquis of Montserrat.

Had the least shadow of reason been left on the side of the emperor, Richard's fate would have been sealed; but the English monarch defended himself with so much eloquence, that no doubt remained in the minds of his audience, and his ransom was agreed upon at one hundred thousand marks of silver. This money was obtained with difficulty; and John and Philip strove to raise greater sums, to tempt the cupidity of the emperor to retain the lion-hearted monarch. The avaricious Henry hesitated; and thus was the liberty of the noble king of England set up at auction, till the Germanic body indignantly interfered, the ransom was paid, and Richard was released.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE PRIORY OF ST. AGNES.

ANXIOUS to visit still more of the holy places, we find the De Veres, Sir Guy de Mowbray, Miriam, and a few more pilgrims, with Father Matthias, seeking the garden of Gethsemane, which, with uncovered heads, they entered barefoot, chanting one of the old Latin hymns, and gathering from the sacred place some leaves and wild flowers, to be kept as sacred relics, then onward to the Mount of Olives they pursued their pilgrim path. Ascending its sacred height, for a few minutes they stood in silence, and then Father Matthias spoke:

"From this holy mount our Lord ascended into heaven nearly twelve hundred years agone, spreading out his blessed hands in holy benediction as he vanisheth out of sight; and on this very Mount of Olives he cometh again when he descendeth to judge the world. Let us, beloved, be found ready to meet him at his coming;" and so the priest continued a train of solemn and eloquent appeals, at the close all joining in the ascension hymn of the venerable Bede:

"A hymn of glory let us sing;
New songs throughout the world shall ring;

By a new way none ever trod,
Christ mounteth to the throne of God.

"The apostles on the mountain stand, —
The mystic mount in Holy Land;
They, with the Virgin-mother, see
Jesus ascend in majesty.

"The angels say to the eleven:
'Why stand ye gazing into heaven?
This is the Saviour, — this is He!
Jesus hath triumphed gloriously!'

"They said the Lord should come again,
As these beheld him rising then,
Calm, soaring through the radiant sky,
Mounting its dazzling summits high.

"May our affections thither tend
And thither constantly ascend,
Where, seated on the Father's throne,
The reigning in the heavens we own!

"Be Thou our present joy, O Lord!
Who wilt be ever our reward;
And, as the countless ages flee,
May all our glory be in Thee!"

We will direct our steps to the Priory of St. Agnes, where Eveline has been all these weary months, even years, without tidings from those she loved, save the news which reached England of events in the Holy Land, frequently

false rumors: for there were no posts in those days, and only by private hand could friends communicate.

But such an opportunity has come at length; and a holy palmer is at the gate of the convent, direct from Palestine, having come on the fleet that brought the queen to England.

The prioress extended a hearty welcome to the palmer, saying:

"Hast news from the holy land? for truly our hearts pineth for tidings."

Drawing a letter from his scrip, he replied:

"I have that for the Lady Eveline de Vere that gladdeth her heart, I trow," handing the letter to the prioress.

Ordering refreshment for the palmer, the lady sought the presence of her niece; and holding the letter before her, Eveline sprang forward with hands clasped, exclaiming:

"From Palestine! Would that I could read the dear words!"

Seated quickly, eagerly she listened to the contents, which had been written but recently.

"To my well-beloved Sister Eveline de Vere:

"In this far-off land of the burning sun and scorching sand, mine eyes turn ever, with eager longing, to the green trees and cool shades of Ravenscliff, and to thee, sister mine, the more beloved from the long absence.

"We have seen perils by sea and perils by land, sickness and wasting fever, and bloody strife and wickedness abounding, dearest Eveline, that make me long for the quiet turret and the winter fireside; albeit the sharp, fierce winds

whistle through the old castle. By the blessing of God, we are all alive; albeit many a brave knight sleepeth with legs crossed and hand sheathing the sword, resting from his toils, so far from home.

"But I wot, sister mine, that thou art waiting for a name dear to thee, and would fain hear of Sir Walter de Courtenay ere I write of others. Thy gallant knight is well, Eveline, and hath distinguished himself in several battles. He was wounded at Jaffa, but not severely.

"He pineth for sight of thee, sister mine; and I trow that will be a joyful day, when thou seest the cavalcade of the returning crusaders crossing the drawbridge at Ravenscliff.

"We have had much converse with Sir Walter, and the more we wot of him, the more we love and honor him. He sendeth a box of gifts to thee by the palmer who beareth this letter. I could wish much to see thy bright face when opening thy treasures, for there are some brave gifts among them for a young demoiselle.

"Many of us are sore wasted by reason of the fever that consumeth our flesh; but we are bounden by our sacred vow to tarry until the end be. There have been many battles, and much sorrow and suffering following; and for a long season I waited upon the tents of the Hospitallers, where, in mine own feeble way, I could comfort the servants of the Lord. I there met with a lovely Jewess. Start not, Eveline, while thou makest the sign of the holy cross at the name so despised; for I have learned to love her well, and so wilt thou. Like an angel of mercy she hath visited the sufferers of all nations in the warfare; and thou shouldst see, sister mine, with what smiles of joy the wan faces greet the fair Miriam in her walks through the hospitals.

"Lancelot was sore wounded in the siege of Acre, and taken to the house of Miriam, where she tenderly nursed

our brother, and thy sister, too, when she fell prostrate with fever.

"We talk much together of our Holy Scriptures: she reading to me the old prophets, and I the blessed Gospel of him whom Jesus loved. Miriam hath a quick, inquiring mind, and none of the hard unbelief which we have been taught belongeth to the Jews; and so it fell out that as we read together, the true light dawned, and out of her own Scriptures she hath learned to love our Saviour as her own Messiah — much like the time when our Lord appeared to Mary as the gardener; for, like unto her, as we read, Miriam hath learned to say 'Rabboni.' We are dear friends now, as thou wilt be also when thou seest the dark, eloquent eyes of our lovely Jewess beaming upon us all around the hearth-stone at Ravenscliff, as one of our own; for when the crusade is at an end, she returneth with us as our brother Lancelot's chosen wife, or waiteth for him an' he be not in Palestine when we depart.

"It was a long time ere Acre capitulated; and then the king had all the churches purified, and in long procession we marched to the church, where a solemn *Te Deum* celebrated our victory.

"It would have been one of great joy had not the king ordered the cruel massacre of five thousand Moslem prisoners in cold blood. I besought their pardon on my knees; but the laws of the crusades ordered the terrible deed; and ever syth that day, doubts and questions arise in my mind about the name of the Holy War; and I begin to think that in our own England, and in my father's castle, I can serve my Master better than in this fierce and bloody land. Lancelot and Guy have made great names in the warfare; and the king hath bestowed upon our father and the two young knights the order of the Golden Star, — the highest honor of knighthood. I must not forget to tell thee that

our Miriam hath been baptized, and partaken of the Holy Eucharist, and is now with the Christians heart and hand, as it regardeth our holy faith. We had a weary march to Ascalon; but we were brought safely through all its perils, and after doing wondrous deeds of valor, the crusaders were victorious, and the Saracens fled to the hills. Lancelot and Guy defended the holy cross throughout the battle, the brave knights Sir Bryan de Bourg and Sir Jacques d'Avesnes, with several others, fell mortally wounded. The Templar died like a brave knight. And now I have dolorous news for the Lady Edith de Mowbray, for the Baron of Hawksworth was among the killed, of whom I will tell thee more when we meet.

"The battle of Jaffa closed the third crusade, and it is said that never did the king do greater deeds of valor than before that city. One of our last acts was to witness the funeral ceremonies of six brave knights, conducted with great pomp by order of the king, who forbade like honors to the Baron of Hawksworth, for reasons that I put not on paper. In his last moments, he charged Guy to bury him at Hawksworth, and, under the care of a skilful person, his remains have been embalmed.

"Then came the great event for which I came to Palestine; for, Eveline, I have seen Jerusalem. My feet have trodden the hill of Calvary, up which the blessed feet of our dear Lord toiled on the doleful night before he suffered. I have a stone from the holy mountain. Mine eyes have looked upon the Holy Sepulchre, and have wept holy tears on the sacred spot. At the door of the church, I bought five crosses of wood from the Mount of Calvary, — one for the lady prioress, one for thee, one for Father Ambrose, not forgetting good old Cicely, and keeping one for myself.

"I have stood in the garden of Gethsemane, and plucked leaves from the trees, and a wild flower from the spot where

our Lord agonized; and on the Mount of Olives, a small company of us heard Father Matthias, a holy monk, preach such a sermon as I shall never forget.

"This is a reward for all our toil, sister mine; but now I must tell thee of the sorrows of our pilgrimage. Our mother, the Lady Jaqueline, hath been sick of fever, and, though relieved of that, languisheth in great weakness. Wilfred d'Arcy was sore wounded before Acre,—hath had the fever, and I trow draweth nigh to the gates of the holy city. Sir Amelot de Russy hath been many times wounded; hath endured great hardship and weariness, and will fight never again in the holy war.

"The queen and her court, with the king's sister, Joan of Sicily, soon sail for England; this letter going with the fleet, and the king and his army will soon follow. Thou knowest, Eveline, with what devotion I took the cross; but two years in Palestine have shorn the Holy War of its right to that name, so long as I read the blessed Gospel, —debauchery, blasphemy, drunkenness in times of inactivity, pride, arrogance, cruelty in times of warfare,— this is not the way for Maude de Vere, I trow, in which to serve the meek and loving Master of the Gospel of St. John. Henceforth a path more womanly and quiet, and more holy and heavenly, will be my choice.

"Thou wilt bear my reverence and love to good Father Ambrose. Tell him that I will soon be at Ravenscliff to make his furmety and gruel, and to wait upon him an' he be sick. And good old Cicely! tell her to have my turret ready, for, an' we sail this autumn, we be with you, God willing, in the winter, or in the spring at latest.

"Making all due account of wintry gales and detentions on our voyage, we hope to be with you long before the cuckoo sings.

"Gertrude Ellerton and Bertha Ducange have borne

their hardships well, and good help and comfort have they been to the sick and weary, for they have been preserved from wasting sickness, suffering from the climate only a few days. My greeting and dutiful love to the lady prioress. Tell her to have prayers for us at St. Agnes, for we set sail, I trow, ere long. All join me in sending much love — our father, the Baron of Ravenscliff, the Lady Jaqueline, Sir Guy de Mowbray, and Miriam the Jewess, who will soon be one of us. God he knoweth that she be one of the true followers of our Lord. And so I commit you with much love to God's dear keeping. Thus writeth Maude de Vere to her well-beloved sister, the Lady Eveline.

"*Eve of St. Michael and All Angels*, 1192."

Taking the letter with them, the Lady Eveline and the prioress hastened to the castle of Ravenscliff, where they gladdened the heart of the good old priest and Cicely.

"The Holy Virgin and the blessed saints be lauded for this good tidings," said Father Ambrose, crossing himself.

"I need no second bidding about the turret," said Cicely. "Truly thou hast gladded my old heart. It is such joy to think of the Lady Maude once more in her little turret; but it troubleth me to wot that they come in winter, when there are so many wrecks on the sea."

"We will have holy prayers for them twice a day, good Cicely," said the priest; "and the blessed Virgin send them in safety to us once more."

In charge of a guard, the ladies hastened to Hawksworth, where the prioress read the letter to the Lady Edith, withholding, however, all that might give pain.

In her delicate state of health, it was a great shock; but, turning to the prioress, she said:

"It comforteth us to know that we can lay his remains among us, and can inter him with the honors of knightly burial."

The affairs of the kingdom greatly needed the presence of the king, and the readers of the letter were glad to know that he had left Palestine; for John was busy with his intrigues among the nobles, and the realm was in a state of great disorder and confusion. But it alarmed them not a little to find from the palmer that he was a prisoner in some unknown fortress.

The crusaders are now separating. The Baron of Ravenscliff, gathering the remains of his gallant host, is preparing to leave Palestine; Maude and Miriam parting with the hope of a speedy meeting at Ravenscliff, and in one month after the king's departure, they sailed for England; the autumn storms near at hand, in those days of imperfect navigation the more to be dreaded.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### RETURN OF THE CRUSADERS.

THE voyage was tedious and stormy, and, with the miserable accommodations on ship-board, much suffering was endured by the invalids. Constant sea-sickness in the heavy gales wore out the frames of the Lady Jaqueline and Maude, and Wilfred gave signs of daily decline.

The sailors, too, had begun to grow suspicious of the large box on board that contained the remains of the Baron of Hawksworth; for, with the superstition of their craft, had they known that there was really a corpse on board, they would have attributed all their mishaps to the presence of the dread passenger; but the fact was carefully concealed, lest there should be a mutiny.

In the closer associations of a sea voyage, we find Guy constantly by the side of the Lady Maude; for the duties of a knight had engrossed his time in Palestine, and had frequently caused weeks to intervene between their moments of hurried intercourse. But now we find Maude with her cithern, whenever the weather allowed it, on the deck, singing her sweet hymns in company with Guy, (for he was beginning to love the same,) and improving the time in reading the blessed Gospel.

They are discoursing now about the wonderful appearance of the Lord on the Lake of Tiberias.

"Thou seest, Guy, how the disciples were frighted when they saw that vision on the water; but how their hearts were cheered when his blessed lips spoke the precious words: 'It is I, be not afraid.' Methinketh that we need never be frighted in our voyage to Paradise an' we always hear that voice of our dear Lord."

"The din of warfare drowneth it, I trow; and it seemeth now that the Church of our day be sadly astray from the Spirit of our Lord. How cometh it, Maude; for holy men have often led the army of the crusaders?"

"We know but little, Guy, of the history of our world in the centuries between the days of the holy apostles and our own; but, in some way, a spirit of pride and cruelty hath entered into the Holy Church."

"Father Jerome saith that the infant days of the Church needed nursing when it was weak and persecuted; but as the years roll on and heresies creep in, there is need of punishment, as there is when children travel on to youth and manhood."

"This is a hard question, Guy. Which is the heresy,—that which keepeth close to the footsteps of the twelve, or that which departeth wide from their holiness and heavenly love?"

"It seemeth so, I trow; but there is another side forsooth! an' they are gifted by St. Peter with the spirit that erreth not, this that puzzleth thee may be the Gospel of the present day."

"Think it not so, Guy. Our blessed Lord changeth not. His ministry is ever one of holiness and love; and that which breatheth not his spirit is not the real Gospel. But see, Guy, there is the rising moon. How calmly she smileth on the sea! It mindeth me of the city where there needeth no sun, neither moon to shine upon it; for the Lord is its everlasting light. But this mindeth me, too, of the story of the old boatman that we met in Palestine. He told a marvellous tale of the Lake of Tiberias, saying that ever before the day of the transfiguration there shineth a flood of fire all over the mountain, and strange sights and sounds for those who have courage to ascend Mount Tabor."

Wilfred, too, is a listener to this conversation; and not a day passes by without hearing the words of the Lord from the lips of Maude de Vere; and, comforted by the sweet message and the holy hymns, he is learning to look with hope toward the deep river that he is so soon to cross.

After the sea-sickness is over, the Lady Jaqueline is reviving under the influence of the sea-air, and is anxiously looking forward to the day when she shall once more tread the shores of England.

But as the winter months approach, the storms are more frequent and violent; and, disabled at last in a heavy gale, they are obliged to put in port for repairs, which detains them a month at least.

Setting sail again, the fleet is once more on the voyage, the home-sickness increasing with the long delay. But they are in sight of England at length, and sailing merrily up the channel, with every pennon flying and trumpets

sounding their return, amid the cheers and shouts of the multitude on the shores, they cast anchor in the port of Seaford, where all the bells of the town greeted the arrival of the crusaders, but are obliged to halt awhile to disband the troops. And now the baron's army take up their march for home; the news of their coming having travelled before them a day or two by a herald dispatched to the castle.

Eveline is watching in the turret, for, with the prioress, she has returned to Ravenscliff, anxiously waiting for the returning crusaders. It is a bright morning of the early spring-time, two years since they had left their native land. The warder in his tower and the inhabitants of the castle in the walls are watching too. There is at length the shrill sound of a distant trumpet; the bells of the churches, for miles around, are pealing out the national joy, and Eveline is straining her eyes for the first glimpse, remembering the glories of the setting out, — but what will be the return?

Maude, in her litter, with beating heart, is watching too, inhaling the sweet breath of spring and the refreshing picture of her own dear England, in that early season, — all the way they are greeted with the ringing of bells and the shouts of the inhabitants of the towns and the wayside spectators in the country districts. They are ascending a hill which commands a fine view for miles around.

"Ravenscliff!" exclaimed Maude, as the joyful tears rained over her pale face; and the Lady Jaqueline, bowing her head between her hands, shared the silent joy.

"Home again!" said Wilfred d'Arcy. "Home to die, — blessed thought to one so weary!"

And now they are at the drawbridge. The banners are floating on the barbican and on the keep, the people on the walls are shouting in transports of joy, the peasants following the procession even to the very gates, the children throwing up their caps, while the rich voice of the baron calls out, "Down portcullis!" and the warder with his one rough hand wipes the moisture that dims his old eyes, as, with the other, he obeys the order of his lord.

There are gallant knights and noble ladies in that cavalcade, — there are brave men-at-arms and banners too; but out of forty-five hundred that marched out so gallantly, but twelve hundred return, and the banners that then floated so gayly on the breeze are torn and tattered now. The baron and Sir Guy de Mowbray head the procession, wearing the insignia of the Golden Star, — the latter bearing the cross that he rescued so bravely in the battle of Ascalon. Following them comes the brave Sir Walter de Courtenay. Then come the litters containing the ladies, Wilfred d'Arcy and Sir Amelot de Russy, the brave knight who will fight no more.

Though defeated and disappointed, the knights that follow, with the dauntless spirit of chivalry, join in singing the palmer's hymn; referring it now not to Jerusalem below, but to that above.

Father Ambrose is at the entrance, bearing aloft the holy cross, ready to welcome the brave Baron of Ravenscliff.

Not in the banqueting-hall tarries Eveline and the prioress, for by the side of the priest she stands, tears of joy raining over her sweet face; for she hath seen, with beating

heart, the waving plume in the tall figure so long looked for, and, in another minute, clasped in the arms of Sir Walter de Courtenay, the long suspense and weary watching are at an end; then, folded to the bosom of father, mother, sister, alternately, the rapture is speechless for a moment, and she exclaims:

"The Holy Mother and all the saints be lauded for this blessed meeting!"

The lady prioress is a partaker of the joy. Old Father Ambrose, too, is garrulous with blessings, and Cicely, in the fulness of her heart, clasps the knees of the Ladies Jaqueline and Maude. The joy is felt throughout the domains of the baron. For several days there was roasting of oxen at Ravenscliff, and many a barrel of good ale was freely broached in the banqueting-hall, where the retainers of the baron had opportunity to express their welcome in their rude but heartfelt way; for Saxon and Norman mingled here, at least, in hearty good-will. Many inquiries were made by the lady of the castle; and the Saxon mothers had their own grievances, which they were not afraid to tell to the Lady of Ravenscliff, whose smile was always ready at accounts of their prosperity and her tears when listening to their sorrows.

The Lady Maude was equally engrossed by the younger visitors.

Maude is in her turret once more, weak and weary, looking out upon the sweet landscape. The fresh tints of the early spring are on the trees, the singing of sweet birds fill the air — the song of the cuckoo bringing tears, it sings so

much of home in England. The red stork is building her nest again in the wall-tower; and, in the midst of the quiet repose of her sanctum, Maude's thoughts are framing themselves into visions of a future life of usefulness, in which the glitter and glamour of the crusades bewilder no more. Away from its noise and tumult, she is travelling again by the side of the Crucified, — present in thought at the marriage feast at Capernaum, where Jesus wrought his first miracle, she adores the divine teacher; again she listens to the conversation between Christ and Nicodemus in the concealment of the night, weighing, in silent gratitude, the wisdom, truth, and love of that silent hour. She sits by the well of Samaria, where Jesus invites the woman to the living fountains; she adores the mercy that heals the nobleman's son and the multitudes at the pool of Bethesda. Following the Lord, she listens to the glorious doctrine of the resurrection, and, with deeper reverence, reads the injunction of the Lord to "Search the Scriptures," because they testify of him. Watching his miracles of power, she is with him again on the Lake of Tiberias, and hears the blessed words to the trembling disciples; then she studies, with all the windows of her heart wide open, the precious doctrines of the Son of God, — his wonderful mercy to the sinful woman, his revelation of himself as the Good Shepherd, his love for Lazarus and his sisters, the raising from the dead, his last supper with his disciples, his washing of their feet, his words of cheer to those who were so soon to be bereaved, his last prayer for the church of the redeemed, the promise of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, his baptism

of suffering, the agony of the garden, the jeers of the multitude on his way to the cross, the shame, the anguish of Calvary, the glory of the ascension on Mount Olivet, — all one record of mercy, one bright example of self-forgetting, self-sacrificing love. Back to the day when John the Baptist first found the Lord by the river Jordan, she reads, with deep emotions, the words of the great harbinger:

"Behold the lamb of God!" and as one after another was led to follow the Lord, the words of the narrative fell upon Maude's heart with deep power, impressive in their simplicity, suggesting a world of active thought.

"And he brought him to Jesus."

In reviewing the crusades, she remembered naught but a record of fanaticism and cruelty, of blasphemy and revenge. Putting it side by side with the example of our Lord, not a lineament could she trace of his holy character, save in the benevolence of Father Matthias, the simple faith of some few who have learned truly to trust in and follow Jesus in the midst of mediæval darkness and superstition. Looking out upon the homes of the Saxons, the huts of the peasants, and the inhabitants of this feudal castle, Maude sees now what the Lord would have his people do in the six words that have opened such deep fountains of thought: "And he brought him to Jesus."

Day by day the image of the Lady Eveline appeared first in her prayers; and we find Maude reminding her of the engagement of long ago.

"Dost mind, dear Eveline, of the pledge made before thou wentest to London?"

"It hath often visited me in thy days of absence, Maude; and sorely it grieved me when thy letter came, and the lady prioress wotteth much that I would read alone."

"Art ready, Eveline, to take thy lessons?"

"Right glad would I be, sister mine, an' I could read, but methinketh that it be hard toil."

Kissing the fair cheek, Maude replied:

"I trow not; for when the heart longeth for aught, the wit cometh with the toil."

Thus the compact was sealed between the two; and early on the following day, the lessons commenced in the turret, not interrupted by the presence of Sir Walter, who had returned to court. Sometimes discouraged, Eveline would have given up the task, but Maude's skill and perseverance kept her pupil up to her work, and in a few weeks there was progress. Eveline was truly happy when she found that she could read simple words, and there was no turning back now.

But the letters from Sir Walter puzzled the young lady, for there was much that she would have preferred that her eyes only should read, and all must come to her through Maude.

One day, Eveline lingered in the turret, evidently with something to say.

"What wouldst thou, sister mine?" said Maude.

"Another boon, fair sister," was the reply. "Wilt trouble thyself once again?"

"Methinketh it no great task to serve thee, Eveline."

"I would give much to write, sister mine. Thinkest thou that I could learn?"

"Doubt it not. Thou hast taken brave steps in reading; and thou failest not in writing when thou hast such an object; for I trow that Sir Walter be the gainer."

And now we find an earnest pupil in the turret daily, Eveline as much pleased as her teacher with her progress. Never a day did Maude allow to pass without reading the blessed Gospel, looking in simple faith for the blessing.

But we turn awhile to Hawksworth, where the Lady Edith received the remains of her lord. Clad in the armor of his father, Sir Guy de Mowbray, mounted on the charger of the deceased, richly caparisoned, bearing shield and banner, headed the funeral procession; and Sir Richard de Mowbray had knightly burial in the chapel of his own castle, where, amid the solemnities of a Mass for the dead, he sleeps his last sleep.

Maude is found at the castle, welcomed with outstretched arms by the Lady Alice and Blanche de Lacy.

Seated by the couch of the Lady Edith, with hands clasped in sweet reunion (for the estrangement between the two families had never chilled the love of the females), she is a blessed minister of comfort.

Daily visited by Father Jerome, who is a rigid Romanist, the Lady Edith partakes regularly of the offices of the Church; but the sweet readings of the Gospel by the Lady Maude, and the heavenly piety of some of the old Latin hymns, are really the food which nourishes the soul of the departing.

"Thou wilt be sister to my dear children, Maude, when thou comest to Hawksworth," said the lady. "I have ever looked to thee as the future lady of the castle, and bless the holy Virgin every day that she sendeth thee to Guy."

"Methinketh, Lady Edith, that there is much need of wisdom in such a calling, for I learn in the Gospel that there is more than 'broidery and music, more than even cooking and surgery, to be taught by the lady of a feudal castle."

"Thy holy work in Palestine fitteth thee for saintly work at home, I trow, Maude."

"Long tarrying in that land hath changed much my thoughts of the crusades, Lady Edith. I may have learned patience and compassion there, but love divine only in the Gospel."

"A long season of wasting sickness hath wearied my heart wholly of the world, Maude, and the music of the holy city seemeth very near; but syth thy coming, the words of Jesus have become so much more precious, that in my secret prayers I find my heart goeth up to him more than to the holy saints."

"That pleaseth our Lord, I trow, and comforteth thee in thy last passage."

The last hour is nearer than any imagined, for in a very few days Maude summoned the family to the couch, for the soul of the Lady of Hawksworth is passing away. She has bidden farewell to all of earth, and ere the prayer of commendation is offered up by the priest, she has entered into rest.

A solemn funeral follows; and, laid in the same chapel by her lord, we leave the castle to return to Ravenscliff.

Maude is rapidly regaining her strength in the invigorating climate of her own land; and it is well that it is so, for she has much holy work by the side of the dying yet, for Wilfred d'Arcy is rapidly failing, never having rallied since the sickness in Palestine.

"Thou wilt see me daily, Lady Maude," said the young esquire; "for it seemeth that I am almost in sight of the gates of the holy city. I trust that, by the goodness and mercy of God, and by the intercession of the blessed saints, the way to Paradise be open; for Father Ambrose hath administered the last rites, and I am only waiting. But the priest leaveth disquieting thoughts, Lady Maude, and talketh to me of mortal sins and venial sins. How wot I which before the throne of God is venial and which is mortal? How wot I whether the penance laid upon my sinful soul is enow to obtain absolution!"

"Think thou of Gethsemane and the bloody sweat of Calvary and the dying agony. Look thou to Jesus, good Wilfred. Thou canst do naught to buy salvation. Prayers, penances, saints, sacraments, naught must come in the place of Christ himsel'. He hath done all the work; we stretch out the hand of faith and take the blessing."

Wilfred has had a weary, restless night, and the Lady Jaqueline has ordered the sufferer to be removed from his own gloomy sleeping-room to one adjoining the 'broidery-room,—comfortable, airy, and having an eastern exposure;

Cicely bringing her own couch into the room, that she may watch his declining hours.

We find the Lady Maude at an early hour by the side of the sufferer, who, propped up by pillows, receives her with a wan, but grateful smile. Turning his languid eyes towards the east, he said:

"This is, in sooth, a blessed change from the dark closet, Lady Maude; for here I see the first rosy beams of the sun, and it mindeth me of the city whose sun never setteth."

"The Lady Jaqueline, my good mother, hath ordered the change, with commands to see that thou hast all that sickness needeth."

"Naught have I to remember in the castle of Ravenscliff but gentle deeds;" and, fixing his eyes tenderly upon the face of the young damsel, he continued in low tones of deep feeling, "and thou, Lady Maude, hast been a joy and light in my path ever syth, as a lonely orphan, I came to thy hearthstone. Thou hast cheered many a weary hour; and here I may tell thee, fair lady, that I have ever loved thee silently, deeply, hopelessly. Thou art in my thoughts by day and my dreams by night, and here I bless thee. Thou wilt be a holy saint at Hawksworth, as thou art here, I trow, and Sir Guy hath naught but joy in thy gentle rule in his castle; but I be far away, waiting for thee at the gates of the holy city, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage."

Maude sat in silence with her face buried in her hands, large tears trickling through her fingers.

"Weep not, Lady Maude. The sorrow hath all passed

with me, and I leave thee with no bad blood to Sir Guy de Mowbray — naught but blessing in my heart for thee. I only ask to be remembered." Taking a ring from his finger, he placed it upon Maude's, continuing: "Wilt wear this, lady, for the sake of Wilfred when he sleepeth under the green sod? And could I ask one boon in Paradise, it will be to attend upon thy steps as thy guardian angel throughout all the days of thy pilgrimage, and when thou diest, to be the first to bear thee home to the city where there is naught but peace and joy and love divine, — neither sin nor sorrow, nor parting nor crying any more, Lady Maude."

"Blessed art thou, Wilfred d'Arcy, an' thou hast a sure hope of a home with Jesus," said the trembling voice beside the couch. "Thou mayst be sure that I forget thee never, Wilfred; for my childish sports, the joys of my youth, the sorrows of pilgrimage, are all linked with thy name, good friend; and I trow that it will be holy joy when we reach the shining shore of the blessed city, and sit upon the banks of the river that floweth through the golden streets, to talk together of the way that the Lord hath brought us. It hath pleased him that we walk not together on our pilgrim path; but an' we reach the same blessed home, we sorrow not, I trow, that for a short season we part; thou to enter into rest before me, and I to do the Lord's work in my earthly home."

"Wottest thou, fair lady, what we shall most remember in that far-off city?"

"It seemeth, Wilfred, the days spent in the turret, when thou first didst learn in sooth, to love our Lord and his truth."

"Yea, truly, Lady Maude, for it was there that I learned the holy Gospel, and thou wert my blessed teacher, fair saint. Seest thou, fair lady, this faded glove?" (at the same time taking one from his doublet.) "Thou didst drop it once when thou wert passing through the wards of the Hospitallers, and I have treasured it with the remains of a withered flower gathered in the same way. But sing to me, lady, one of thine own sweet hymns just once more;" and tenderly the maiden sang of the life that is and that which is to be.

"Brief life is here our portion;
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life, is there.

"O happy retribution!
Short toil, eternal rest;
For mortals and for sinners
A mansion with the blest!

"And now we fight the battle,
But then shall wear the crown
Of full and everlasting
And passionless renown.

"And now we watch and struggle,
And now we live in hope,
And Sion, in her anguish,
With Babylon must cope.

"But He whom we now trust in
Shall then be seen and known;
And they that know and see Him
Shall know Him for their own!"

"One more boon have I, lady; once more to visit the chapel, and receive the holy Eucharist from the hands of Father Ambrose."

"Thou shalt have thy wish, Wilfred."

At the hour of even-song, Wilfred was carried to the chapel, and laid upon a couch before the altar, and with the members of the household around him, old Cicely not forgotten, partook, for the last time, of the memorials of the Lord's passion on Calvary.

The music was low and sweet; the glowing rays of the setting sun flooded the picture of the Virgin over the altar; and, after the service, Wilfred tarried a few moments to take his last look at familiar objects.

"Seest thou the face of the Holy Virgin, lady?" said the sufferer. "Truly the blessed face seemeth to look upon us with favor."

"It is naught but a picture, Wilfred, of one that was highly honored as the mother of our Lord, but in no wise to be worshipped or adored. I trow that the Holy Mother would not herself be over-well pleased an, she wist how men do worship unto her that belongeth unto her Son; and the like, I trow, may be said of all God's saints."

Stopping at the chapel-door on his way out, he turned one sorrowful look backward, saying:

"Never again — never again."

From this day Wilfred faded rapidly, and Maude is daily by his couch.

It is Easter morning, — the queen of days, — bright, glorious in its earthly sunshine on this holy day — brighter

and more glorious in its grand, stupendous hopes for the children of the resurrection. The shadows of the death-angel's wing are slowly creeping over the face of the sufferer, and, taking the clammy hand within her own, Maude said in low, sweet tones:

"Thou art in the troubled waters of Jordan, Wilfred; but the Lord is there, too. Hear his blessed words: 'It is I: be not afraid.'"

He turned his dying eyes upon the speaker, as he replied:

"I know it, Lady Maude. But read to me about the resurrection; for this is the resurrection day, and it is blessed to go home on Easter morning."

"Listen to our dear Lord's words, good Wilfred.

"'Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

"'Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

"'And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.'

"And, furthermore, good Wilfred, hear his words to Martha.

"'Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"'And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

"'She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art

the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.'

"Canst thou echo Martha's words, good Wilfred?"

A look of rapture passed over the face of the dying, as he replied:

"Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I believe in thee, and that I love thee."

Calling Father Ambrose to the side of the couch, they watched by the departing spirit throughout the sunny hours of that holy day. Finding the spirit about to pass, the priest read the prayer of commendation, and, amid the joy-bells of Easter morning, when the earth was clothed with flowers, Wilfred d'Arcy went home to his everlasting rest. Who knows what echoes of sweet bells were heard from the heavenly turrets, as he passed the bounds of time and sense and was with the angels?

At the appointed time, the chapel-bell called the dwellers in the castle to the Mass for the dead; and interred within the chapel, we leave the lonely orphan of Ravenscliff, and return to the invalids from Palestine. The Lady Jaqueline is rallying daily; but the gallant knight Sir Amelot de Russy has accomplished his work upon earth, and his frame, wholly worn out by excessive action, is about to pay the debt of mortality.

Anxious to die like a brave knight, he was arrayed in his richest uniform, with his sword girded to his side. With a spear in his hand, he summoned the two priests, the Baron of Ravenscliff, and Sir Guy de Mowbray to attend upon him. Held up by the two knights, he exhorted them to go

on unwearied in the path of glory; and then committing himself to the priests, the offices of the Church were administered, and with an eye fixed upon the crucifix, he passed away. Buried with great pomp at the abbey of St. Hilary, the Baron of Ravenscliff riding his richly caparisoned charger, and bearing his helmet, spear, and banner, Sir Amelot de Russy took his place among the brave knights, who, beneath the cloisters of the chapel, lay with crossed legs and chain armor, bearing the triangular shield, and the hand sheathing the sword, as a token of rest from their warfare.

The excitement of these few weeks having passed away, the females return to the daily routine of life in a feudal castle; for the Lady Jaqueline has summoned her ladies once more, and in the 'broidery-room Maude recounts the days spent in Palestine. But instead of the frivolous talk of former days, Maude reads daily from the Gospel, and teaches her sweet Latin hymns to the young maidens; one hour being thus daily spent in this holy employment.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### ONE OF A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

THUS far the intrigues of Prince John had seemed to prosper, and the friends of the king were beginning to grow impatient for his return. With much difficulty, the ransom of silver had been agreed upon, and with more difficulty paid. The conspirators against the throne are beginning to tremble, for well they knew the vindictive character of Richard towards his enemies. Closeted one day with some of his colleagues, the prince was suddenly alarmed by the entrance of an attendant, who placed a small billet in his hand.

"Who brought it?" inquired the prince.

"A Frenchman, my lord, who said that he had ridden night and day to put it into the hands of your highness."

The prince examined it carefully, looking first at the superscription, then at the seal, bearing the impression of three *fleurs-de-lis*. The billet was opened with great agitation, which increased as he read the startling words:

"Take heed to yourself, for the devil is unchained!"

A face blanched to a marble hue betrayed his terror, looking around like unto a person under sentence of death.

The news fell like a bomb-shell among the conspirators.

"It may perchance be a forged letter," said one.

"It is Francis' own hand and seal," replied the prince.

"It is time then to be at work," said another: "what is to be done, must be done quickly."

All England is suddenly aroused by the news of King Richard's release; hastening forward, suddenly he appeared in the presence of his treacherous brother John, who, conscience stricken, and trembling with fear, fell upon his knees, acknowledged his sin, and implored pardon.

The conspiracy was at an end: the king was soon seated firmly on his throne again; and from all parts of the realm, the barons hastened to London to welcome the returning king with fresh vows of allegiance — the Baron of Ravenscliff one of the first.

"Thou art welcome, De Vere," said the king. "What with our defeat in Palestine, and the troubles in our realm, there be much work before us, for our faithless brother hath wrought much evil throughout England."

"He can do naught when King Richard is at home," was the speedy reply; "for the barons are ready to rally around the banner of the Lion of England."

But to return awhile to the castle.

Now that the king is at home again, every heart is looking anxiously for Lancelot, for there seems to be no reason now for delay.

It is not many weeks, and accompanied by his bride, he appeared in their midst.

A heart-warm welcome awaits the stranger, for her amiable qualities as a Jewess had triumphed over prejudice.

And now that Miriam was a Christian, there was ever one of the most honored seats at the fireside for Lancelot's companion.

Clasped in the arms of Lady Maude, who was the first to greet her, she was presented to Eveline, who was charmed with her brother's wife; and to Father Ambrose, who, uttering a Latin prayer, laid his hand upon the head of the young Jewess. But good old Cicely is not so ready to extend the welcome, for she has ever looked upon the Jews as dogs and miscreants, and can scarcely be persuaded that any good thing can come of a race so despised.

But time works wonders; and it will be seen in the case of old Cicely, when receiving nothing but acts of kindness from the converted Jewess.

There is much to interest the young lady, for life in England is so different from what she has been accustomed to. But we find her with Maude in her turret, deep in one of those confidences so common among the young.

Laying a manuscript in her hand, Maude said, smilingly:

"Thou rememberest my promise, Miriam, when Lancelot gave to thee the Gospel; and I have redeemed it, for here be another copy of St. John."

"Thou wilt be doubly pleased, Maude, that thou keepest thy word, when thou hearest of the other. Aunt Esther was deeply grieved when she found that I was coming to England, and pained at the thought that I had forsaken my father's faith; but I comforted her at length with the truth, telling her that I still believed Moses and Abraham, and that the holy prophets were my oracles still, only I

believed more than she, for I had found that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah of whom Moses wrote. I left my Gospel with her: was not that right, Maude?"

"Now, heaven be lauded, Miriam, that I know there be one copy of our Lord's Gospel in Palestine."

"My father left great wealth, Maude, and so I gave the villa to Aunt Esther, with means to keep it open; and she will gather a society of holy women of her own faith, who devote their lives to the suffering and afflicted: who knoweth what the gospel may be there? For our own scriptures saith:

"'So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it;' and the Gospel, Maude, be His word, I trow."

Everything was so different from Palestine to the young Jewess in this old castle. The winter snows, the keen blasts whistling through the loose casements, the Christmas sports, the services at the chapel; but sometimes, when shivering around the huge fire-place, watching the flames as they roared up the great chimney, she remembered the balmy air of her own land more than the burning sun: thus turneth the heart in all parts of the world towards home.

But the services in the chapel pleased the Jewess; for familiarity with the old rituals, though its glory had faded from among the Jews, prepared her for the showy ceremonial of the Catholic Church in those days, for the Jews could certainly trace a likeness between the two.

Winter has passed, and Miriam is glad to exchange the

discomfort of the old castle for the charming freshness of the English spring-time.

"We have nothing like this in Palestine," said Miriam, as they sat in the pleasance; "so cool, so refreshing, so beautifully green!"

With arms interlaced, they trod the walk beneath the spreading branches of the trees.

"I shall miss thee, Maude," said the young lady; "for after Whitsuntide thou leavest for thy new home, and there are none to take thy place, Maude."

"Thou wilt love and cherish my good mother, when I am gone, Miriam; and promise me that thou takest my place in the 'broiderie-room. The Lady Jaqueline readeth not in our tongue, nor any of the ladies of the castle; but thou readest so well, Miriam, and it would so rejoice my heart to wot, fair sister, that thou readest the Gospel at Ravenscliff at the self-same hour that I read at Hawksworth."

"I promise thee, Maude, an' the Lady Jaqueline consenteth."

Maude smiled, as she replied:

"My mother the Lady Jaqueline consenteth, I trow, not only for my sake, Miriam, but for the Gospel's, for she misseth the readings an' I be unable; and thou knowest, Miriam, that there be many around us who hear not the Gospel of our Lord, and it will be blessed work to gather such when I get home to Hawksworth. Father Matthias goeth with me, of which I am right glad, for he mindeth me of Saint Bernard of holy memory."

"One of the old saints that most I honor, Maude; the

only one who extended his protection towards our defenceless people."

"He had the spirit of our Master, Miriam; let us try, fair sister, to follow such examples. But to return to Father Matthias; he approveth of my work at Hawksworth. Every Friday the children come to hear the Gospel, to learn it, and to sing sacred hymns; and on Wednesday any one that chooseth."

"That pleaseth me truly, Maude. But what sayeth Father Ambrose?"

"The good priest doeth much to please me, Miriam; a good, easy soul! And he groweth old and feeble-minded, I trow. Our work be not preaching, Miriam, only reading the Word, and singing our own old hymns."

Whence cometh the spirit of active piety that was stirring in the depths of Maude de Vere's heart? Was she in spirit with the primitive Christians centuries back? or was she centuries ahead of her own days? So deeply had she drunk of the pure fountains of truth, that, leaping over the dark gulf of the past, she had the same spirit that actuated the early Church of Jerusalem, though she knew it not in name; — "continuing daily in the apostles' fellowship and doctrine;" ready, if needs be, to sell all that she had for the love of her Master.

We listen to the two in this quiet home, planning work for the Lord; we read of human assumptions of priestly power in those feudal days, and of the same spirit that exalteth itself in these of the nineteenth century; and, turning over the leaves of our Gospel, we read Peter's address

"to the elect, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia:

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a *royal priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*."

And the beloved Apostle John, too, bears the same glorious testimony in his ascriptions of praise to our dear Lord:

"Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

"And hast made us kings and *priests* unto God and the Father."

And farther on we read of the glory in store for such a spiritual priesthood:

"And hast made us unto our God kings and *priests*, and we shall reign on the earth.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be *priests* and kings of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Such glory have the saints of all ages, and to such a royal priesthood belongeth Maude de Vere and Miriam the Jewess. Two of a royal household, showing forth the praises of the Lord.

Whitsuntide is hastening on, and Sir Guy de Mowbray is often in the pleasance, listening to Maude's plans of benevolence for Hawksworth.

It is Maude's last visit to her turret, for she is soon to be

the Lady of Hawksworth. On bended knees, she pours out holy thanks for all that she has learned in this secluded room, and reviews, with pious gratitude, the history of the manuscript found in the sacristy of Father Ambrose — the mustard seed is spreading its branches now, sheltering many beneath its shade.

Lancelot hath not read in vain, and Miriam the Jewess hath embraced its doctrines; Sir Guy is one in spirit with Maude; Father Matthias is spiritualized by its heavenly teaching; the precious Gospel is in the Holy Land, in the hands of Esther the Jewess; the Lady Jaqueline listens with increasing interest to its message; the Lady Eveline is coming with her questions to Maude; the good baron steals in sometimes to the novel sight in the 'broidery-room, often taking his seat near the youthful reader, and carrying away wholesome food for thought. Wilfred d'Arcy departed, sustained by its blessed hopes; and the Lady Edith, too, had reposed her departing spirit not upon the Church, but upon the bosom of her Lord.

Maude de Vere was truly one in faith with the ancient Vaudois, and, living centuries later, would have probably attested her faith with the scarlet seal of martyrdom; but the Church of Rome had not yet laid her hand of power upon the word of God: though not freely circulated among the masses, who could not read, it had not yet been placed under the ban of the law. Ignorance withheld the light whose glory it could not see; intolerance, in future ages, imprisoned it, when it shed its benign rays upon human intellects.

Ravenscliff is quite astir now, for the wedding-day draweth on.

Gertrude Ellerton, under charge of Raoul, was despatched to London to purchase the wedding gear — scarlet cloth, rich satins, cloth of silver, and costly jewels.

All was cutting out and fitting on, with sundry discussions about trimmings, and head-dresses, and gloves, and wimples.

The baron had ordered two splendid saddle-cloths of green velvet, heavily embroidered, and a handsome outfit for the two brides, for there was to be a double wedding at Ravenscliff.

At length the preparations were completed, and on a splendid summer morning, when the birds sang their most joyous melodies, and the sky was cloudless, Maude and Eveline de Vere were married in the chapel, by Father Ambrose, according to the rites of the Catholic Church.

The brides were attired, one in blue cloth of silver with satin kirtle of the same color, the other in pink; for white would then have been wholly out of place, that being the dress of deepest mourning; their beautiful hair inclosed in nets of silver thread ornamented with seed-pearls, and their jewels the finest diamonds.

The bridegrooms, in crimson velvet trimmed with gold lace, and waving plumes in their caps, and the guests in rich attire, made a grand display in the chapel.

With deeply serious feeling, the young brides assumed their solemn vows; the one to dwell at Hawksworth, the other at London, to mingle with the gay circles at court.

A banquet, to which large numbers were invited, celebrated the joyful event at Ravenscliff, and Miriam the Jewess bore the peacock, dressed in the most costly style, to his place of honor at the table; all awarding to the fair Jewess the palm of beauty, her fine complexion glowing in the rich Eastern costume chosen by Sir Lancelot for that occasion.

And in the moonlight, on the evening of this wedding-day, was seen coming over the ballium a company of quaint little figures to do honor to the youthful brides, who, in their rich attire, descending to meet the children, kindly greeted the delighted group, and each in her turn kissed the hands extended to them. Each, with a basket of flowers in her hand, stood smiling in innocent wonder at the lovely brides, and then, in sweet silvery voices, piped their humble song of childish gratulation. At the close, the little ones were rewarded by an invitation to the castle, where they were abundantly regaled at the wedding-table, each carrying away her portion of good cheer for the good folks at home. Presenting their graceful offerings of flowers to the brides, and singing another song, they took their departure. One of the most humble of all the tributes paid to the ladies, it will be most gratefully remembered as a heartfelt offering from the poor; and, doubtless, these little ones will tell in future years how they were entertained by the lovely brides at the grand wedding at Ravenscliff on this lovely moonlight night in June.

But Maude is leaving Ravenscliff; the cavalcade is at the entrance. It need not be told how Father Ambrose

mourned for his favorite; nor how the large tears fell upon his withered face, as he laid his hand in blessing upon the kneeling figure; how old Cicely stood weeping so long as the cavalcade remained in sight; nor what a void was left in the household when Maude bade farewell. It is true that banners floated on the keep in honor of the day, and joy-bells rang out their merry chimes; but tears mingled with the smiles of gratulation, as Maude, by the side of Sir Guy de Mowbray, attended by a gay retinue, passed out of the ballium, over the drawbridge, waving her farewell to the old warder in the tower, to the people on the walls, and the peasantry by the road-side, who revered and loved the young lady of the castle.

Father Jerome has left Hawksworth for a monastery, his place to be filled by Father Matthias; the Lady Alice and Blanche de Lacey are with the company who are escorting Maude to her new home. She is in the bright sunlight now, growing daily in grace and in the knowledge of her Lord and Saviour.

On the next day after her arrival, Guy is leading her through the castle, and finally up a long flight of stairs to a little door, which, smiling, he unlocked.

"Thou must not miss thy turret, Maude," said Sir Guy, as he introduced her into a small room, not quite so high as her sanctum at Ravenscliff, but with a casement opening upon a lovely vista of landscape. A small carpet lay upon the middle of the floor, a table and crucifix, with a vase of flowers, stood near the window, with the most comfortable chair that could be found, though high-backed and straight;

a picture of the Last Supper hung upon the wall; two metallic fire-dogs graced the chimney-place, and a small candelabra, with four wax candles, hung from the ceiling.

"Thou art very good, Guy," said the lady; "thou couldst not have pleased me better."

"I bought the carpet for thee, sweet one, in Palestine: thou seest that it is Turkish. And the picture of the Last Supper I bought at Jerusalem."

"The carpet will be such a comfort, Guy, in winter; the vase shall be daily filled with flowers. I can never tire of looking at the picture, and the crucifix mindeth me ever of the sufferings of our blessed Lord; albeit I use it not in adoration. This will be another turret of sweet retirement, Guy, when I gather strength for the duties at Hawksworth. But I must know the servants, Guy. Wilt bring them to the 'broiderie-room?"

And here the youthful lady met her serving-people, and chose for her own bower-woman a young girl by the name of Ellspeth, who entertained her companions in the servants' hall with accounts of their new lady.

Fairly domesticated, we find the Lady Maude assembling her ladies daily in the 'broiderie-room, where the first hour was devoted to the reading of the Gospel and the singing of sweet hymns in the Latin tongue, while Sir Guy is directing the employment of the young pages and esquires that belong to the castle. The reading ended, Maude joins the embroiderers,—for she is working an historical piece for the Lady Jaqueline, to be presented at the time of the Christmas joy; the young ladies always glad to see her

take up her frame, for that is the time when she entertains them with stories of the Holy Land.

On Wednesday and Friday, she invites any who desire it to meet her in an apartment set apart for the purpose, with one long table, some rude benches, and her own seat at the head of the table, slightly raised, where, with her sweetly solemn voice, she reads the Gospel, interspersing it with her own simple remarks to the listeners. She is teaching them to sing sacred hymns, too; and the children, who come in large numbers, are never tired of talking about the goodness of the Lady Maude, who thus learns much of the private wants of the people who surround the castle. Her audience increases weekly, and Father Matthias frequently steps in to drop a few words of encouragement to the lady of the castle and instruction to the people. Thus out of the darkness they are travelling into the light.

Truly, it is a new era at Hawksworth! Formerly, the people only obtained access to the castle in the Christmas holidays, when all old castles were thrown open for two weeks; but now, children of the Saxon gentry and the humbler children of the soil mingled together weekly, in friendly terms, around the Lady Maude.

The priest, too, is very active among the people; visiting daily, interesting himself in their affairs, drawing hearts to good Father Matthias by the magnetism of love.

The services at the chapel are attended by many; for, although three old churches were in sight, most prefer the teachings of Father Matthias, and crowd to the chapel at Hawksworth.

We will take a seat in the chapel, and listen to one of these old sermons. Strange contrast between this and those of old Father Ambrose, who seldom preached, and when he did, it were better that he had been silent, for it was only to talk about some of the absurd dogmas of the schoolmen, or to speculate about Michael the archangel, wondering if he were yet chief in hell, or if he might not be overthrown by some other mighty angel; sometimes a whole sermon would be filled with vain speculations about the Wandering Jew; but here at Hawksworth all was so different.

Reading his text first in Latin, he translated the same; and then, in glowing language, exhorted his hearers to follow the Lamb that was slain.

"You see, my children, an' ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye are none of his. Meek and lowly was the Lamb of God: are ye, my children, meek and lowly? Pure and heavenly was the Lamb: are ye, my children, pure and heavenly? Full of love and pity was the Lamb of God: are ye, my children, loving and pitiful? Would ye, my children, stand before the throne, clad in glistening raiment? you must follow the Lamb now, an' ye would walk with him forever in the holy city. Would know how ye may be made like unto him? Bow down before him in dust and ashes, and pray that he may give unto you his own Spirit! Be not weary of praying; for our much praying wearieth not him, and he liketh his people to ask great things."

Thus Father Matthias taught the people at Hawksworth; and the Lord was with him to bless him and give him more light.

Much singing, too, was there at the chapel; for the people were learning many of the old hymns; and it was ever the good priest's delight to sing the praises of the Lamb that was slain.

Stepping aside from the usual seclusion of ladies in those days, with Sir Guy's consent, we find the Lady Maude among the sick, the needy, and the suffering,— attended always by a page, however; the Lady Alice and Blanche de Lacey frequently her companions.

Once a week she distributes her charities among the people; and on Christmas week the neighborhood rejoices in the bounty of the good lord and lady of the castle.

The same offices doth Miriam perform at Ravenscliff; and very sweet are the days when the Lady Maude is expected at her former home. The old warder sounds a call from his horn that all have learned to understand, tipping his cap to the Lady Maude and her retinue as they pass gayly over the ballium; the young pages peep over the palisades of the tilting-yard to welcome the lady; and good old Cicely and Father Ambrose are ready to clasp the small hand as soon as she descends from her palfrey, the music of whose silver bells hath called them to the lower hall.

The Lady Jaqueline and Miriam are striving for the first kiss, while the baron and Sir Lancelot stand smiling by, patiently waiting for their turn.

"One would say that thou comest just from Palestine, Maude," said the baron, "to mark the joy thy visit giveth;

but thou art ever welcome as a May morning, daughter mine!"

But the most joyous of all the reunions are the family gatherings at Christmas, when all its members gather around the hospitable board at Ravenscliff.

And so the years roll on, life bringing its many changes. Father Ambrose rests before the altar in the chapel; old Cicely sleeps in the church-yard near the castle. Miriam, at Ravenscliff, and Maude, at Hawksworth, are filling up the measure of their benevolence in their separate spheres, gathering around them households, who are taught from lisping infancy to love their Master,— stars in the night season of these mediæval days.

In connection with the only Church of Christ that they knew upon earth, they remembered Jesus in his dying agony when they partook of the Holy Eucharist, holding spiritual communion with the Lord whom they loved. So much deep experience of that personal love had filled their hearts, that neither holy saint nor Blessed Virgin was allowed to occupy a throne that was his alone. Out of the darkness of nature into the spiritual life of grace, on the ladder of faith, they were stepping heavenward. Out of the darkness of tradition into the light of an unveiled Gospel, as living epistles of truth, they displayed its power in their daily lives.

Throughout our story, we have been searching for the hidden ones of our Lord, who have been found in all ages of the world; concealed sometimes in mountain fastnesses, following the Lord, to be slaughtered at last by savage

monsters; sometimes in caves of the earth, or in the dark catacombs of Rome, to be dragged forth for gladiatorial shows; sometimes even in the convents of Rome, where the light of truth has penetrated.

We have found them, in this story, in a feudal castle, taught by the pure Word and Spirit of God, serving the Lord in simplicity and truth; and we shall find them all again among that great multitude, sealed by the blood of the Lamb, who stand before the throne in white robes, with palms of victory in their hands. Among such blessed ones shall we find Maude and Miriam of ancient memory, as representatives of our Lord's hidden ones, sealed from all eternity as those ransomed by his precious blood.

The mortal life of the race of the De Veres is ended; at eventide it may have been light, for the Gospel was in that feudal castle, and who dare limit its almighty power?

The Baron of Ravenscliff sleeps in the cloisters of the Abbey of St. Hilary; Sir Lancelot de Vere and Sir Guy de Mowbray by his side. All, like valiant soldiers of the cross, trample the young lion under their feet, with crossed legs, the chain armor, the triangular shield, and the hand sheathing the sword, as in token that, "after long toil," in the language of those days, "they had entered into long peace." The Lady Jaqueline and the Lady Miriam de Vere, with the Lady Maude de Mowbray, lie all with their feet upon a couchant hound; all with hands devoutly clasped in prayer, having the eyes fixed upon the image of the Crucified. The work of the crusaders is done; their history with the things that are past. The age of chivalry has

passed away; the old abbeys are in ruins; walking silently among their crumbling arches, our feet perchance might tread upon some mouldering stones that mark the spot where reposes some brave old knight of feudal days. Where once stood the strong feudal castles of mediæval days, marks of the heel of Time are everywhere apparent; for, in some instances, piles of ruins alone are seen; in other localities they have been preserved in a state that admits of the visits of travellers; and then, again, naught but grassy mounds, or piles of rough, gray stones appear. The proud escutcheons have mouldered and fallen from their ruined walls; the shrill trumpets of the gay tournaments are heard no more; the clangor of martial warfare and the song of the troubadour alike are silent.

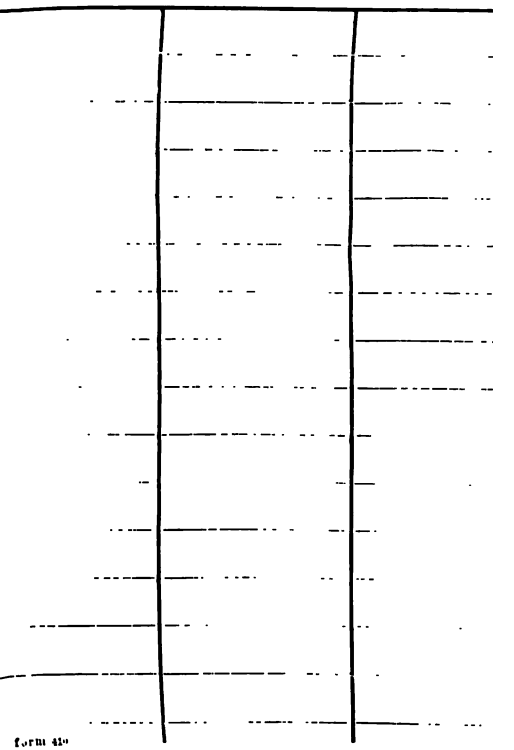
The pageant has passed, and another picture of life's panorama has faded; the great realities evolved out of these ages of confusion and strife yet to come in their perfection.

The imperishable seed found in the Gospel of St. John alone remains; its germs, planted so silently in the lonely turret, developing into ransomed spirits in the Paradise of God, to be clothed hereafter with the glorified image of our Lord.

THE END.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to b
taken from the Building



form 41

MAR 2 3 1927